

>> BIG 12 BASKETBALL PREVIEW >>

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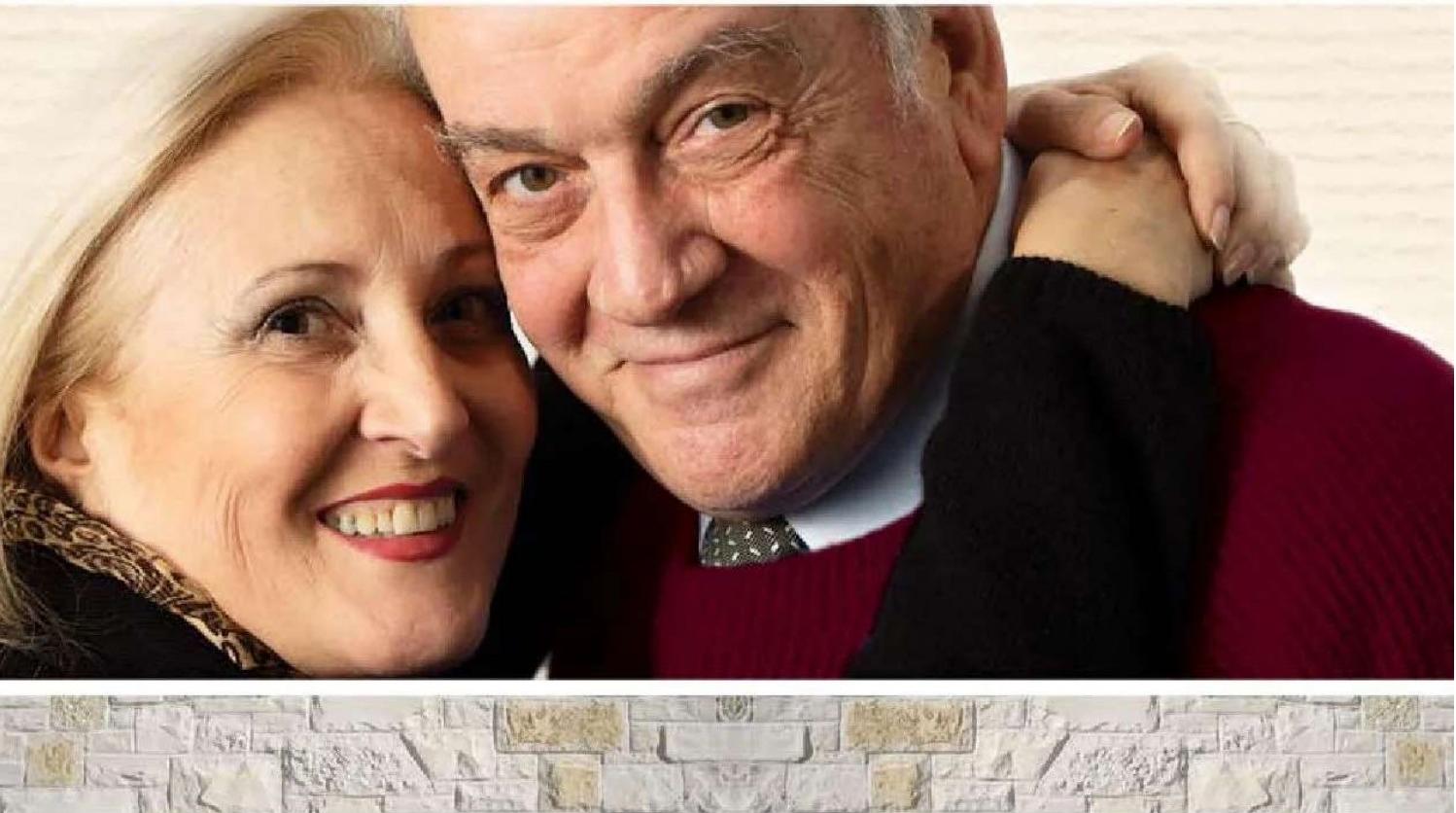
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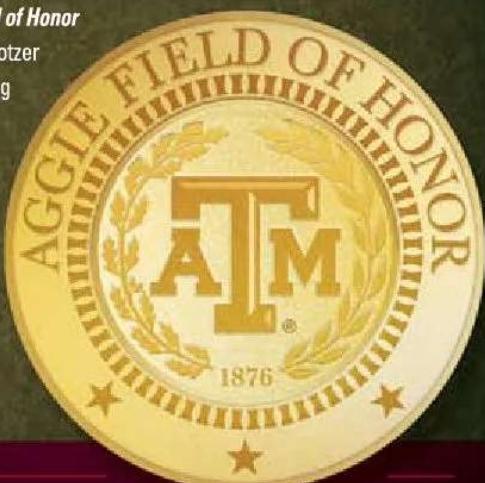
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In his youth, working cattle and cotton on his family farm, Ralph Schmidt set his mind on one goal — earning a degree in Mechanical Engineering from Texas A&M. “Even before I graduated,” Ralph recalled, “the Aggie network opened doors for me.” He started in the oil business with summer jobs at Houston ship channel refineries, all through Aggie contacts.

During his years in the oil industry, the Aggie network was key to Ralph’s success. “A&M played a huge role in my career,” he noted, “and now it’s time for me to help future Aggies.” Working with Matt Jennings of the Texas A&M Foundation, Ralph is funding a professorship and scholarships in Mechanical Engineering and two President’s Endowed Scholarships for academic merit. “Texas A&M is a remarkable educational resource,” said Ralph, “and fortifying academics through the Foundation really helps keep it that way.”

Ralph Schmidt’s loyalty and vision are now part of A&M’s future. Create your own legacy. Call the Texas A&M Foundation and ask for your college’s director of development. When you’re ready to immortalize your spirit and mind, we’re ready for you.

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BY AI STAFF

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BY AI STAFF

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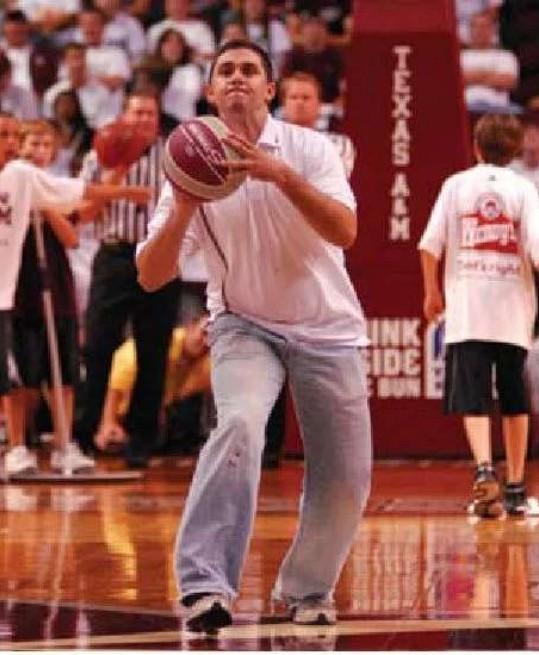
FIND THE 01

On the Cover: Junior Bryan Davis dives for a loose ball during the Arizona basketball game. Photo by Jason McConnell '01.

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Do you know where the photo above was taken? Send an e-mail to photo@aggiemag.com and let us know. Get it right and we'll enter your name in a drawing for a free copy of the book *Standing for America: The Spirit of Kyle Field*. Look for the answer in the next issue of AI. The photo in the November/December 08 issue was of the frisbee golf course at Research Park.



AI's Jeremy Ksionda '04 was put to the test in the Rudy's BBQ Challenge during a timeout in the men's basketball game against Stephen F. Austin in November. Unfortunately, his free throw, 3-pointer and half court shot attempt were unsuccessful. Reasons that could have been heard for the missed attempts:

- "They made me use a rubber, girl's ball."
- "Seeing the crowd through the backboard was distracting."
- "There was too much pressure with so many people watching."
- "Jason (AI's photographer) blinded me with his flash when I shot."
- "That goal isn't regulation."
- "My arms were tired from beating Josh Carter in a 3-point contest earlier in the day."

Howdy!

Well, for the first time in *Aggieland Illustrated*'s short history, this issue is not called the "Bowl Preview Issue." As disappointing as that is to say and despite a few forgettable bowl trips recently, there's no denying that the football program has been steadily declining over the past six or eight years.

There was some hope prior to this season that the new coaching staff would be able to apply a quick fix, but the team's shortcomings were too much to repair overnight. Finishing 4-8 overall for the second time in six seasons and last place in the Big 12 South for the first time in school history, I think it's safe to say the program has reached rock bottom.

As we Aggies embark on another long football offseason, the search for more hope of a brighter future begins. First and foremost, if we are going to turn the corner and finally "rebuild" the program, the culture of losing that has developed over the past few seasons must be changed. That is Mike Sherman and the coaching staff's biggest challenge in my opinion, and it is certainly no small task.

So, if you are like me and are looking for hope, it begins with the underclassmen in the program. You've heard their names and you know that they were generally the most productive players for the Aggies this past season. They will be the leaders on this team for the next few years and they cannot accept losing if the culture is going to change.

Hope can come from recruiting as well. The first full class to be recruited by Sherman's staff is nearly complete, and should fill some glaring holes in the A&M depth chart. The one criticism is that the class lacks enough of the projected "difference makers," although that could change before signing day rolls around. However, the one aspect that cannot be overstated is that these kids are winners. Like Katy High School stars Trent Hunter and Terrence Frederick from last year's class, several of these recruits have played for and won state titles, while nearly every member of the class played in the postseason. If the culture of losing is going to change, these are the types of players that are going to make it happen.

And finally, I'm hopeful that our coaching staff will make the necessary adjustments to improve their performance as well as the team's, and that they will rise to the challenge of playing in the toughest division in college football. Changing the culture of losing ultimately falls on their shoulders. I'm hopeful that they have what it takes to get the job done. And hopefully it will be sooner, rather than later.

Gig'em Ags and Happy New Year!

Brian '01

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Aggieland Illustrated is an independently, Aggie-owned magazine and a proud corporate partner of Texas A&M athletics. The magazine in no way reflects the views or opinions of Texas A&M University.

Aggieland Illustrated (ISSN 1932-9105) is published eight times a year in the United States by Aggieland Illustrated, PO Box 6841, Bryan, TX 77805-6841. Reproduction or use of editorial or graphics content in any manner without permission is prohibited. Photographs and manuscripts for publications are welcome, but will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Address all subscription inquiries and change of address requests to Aggieland Illustrated, PO Box 6841, Bryan, TX 77805-6841. Allow up to eight weeks for response.

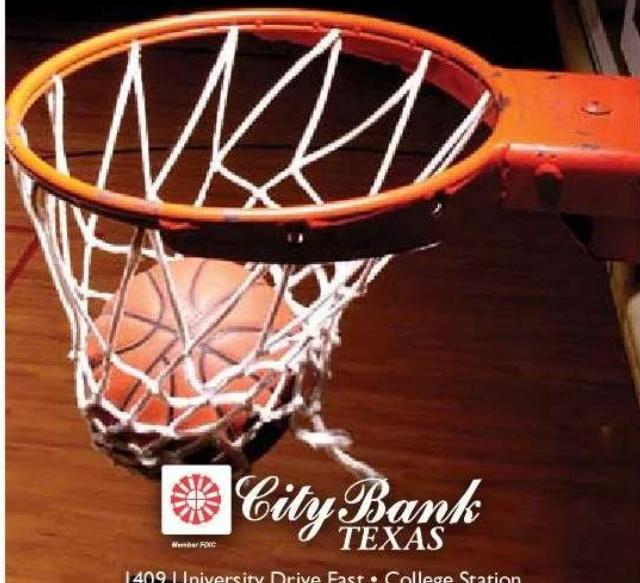
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Volume 3, Number 4

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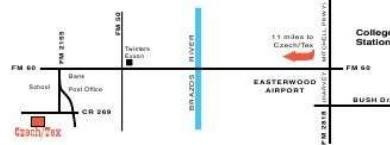
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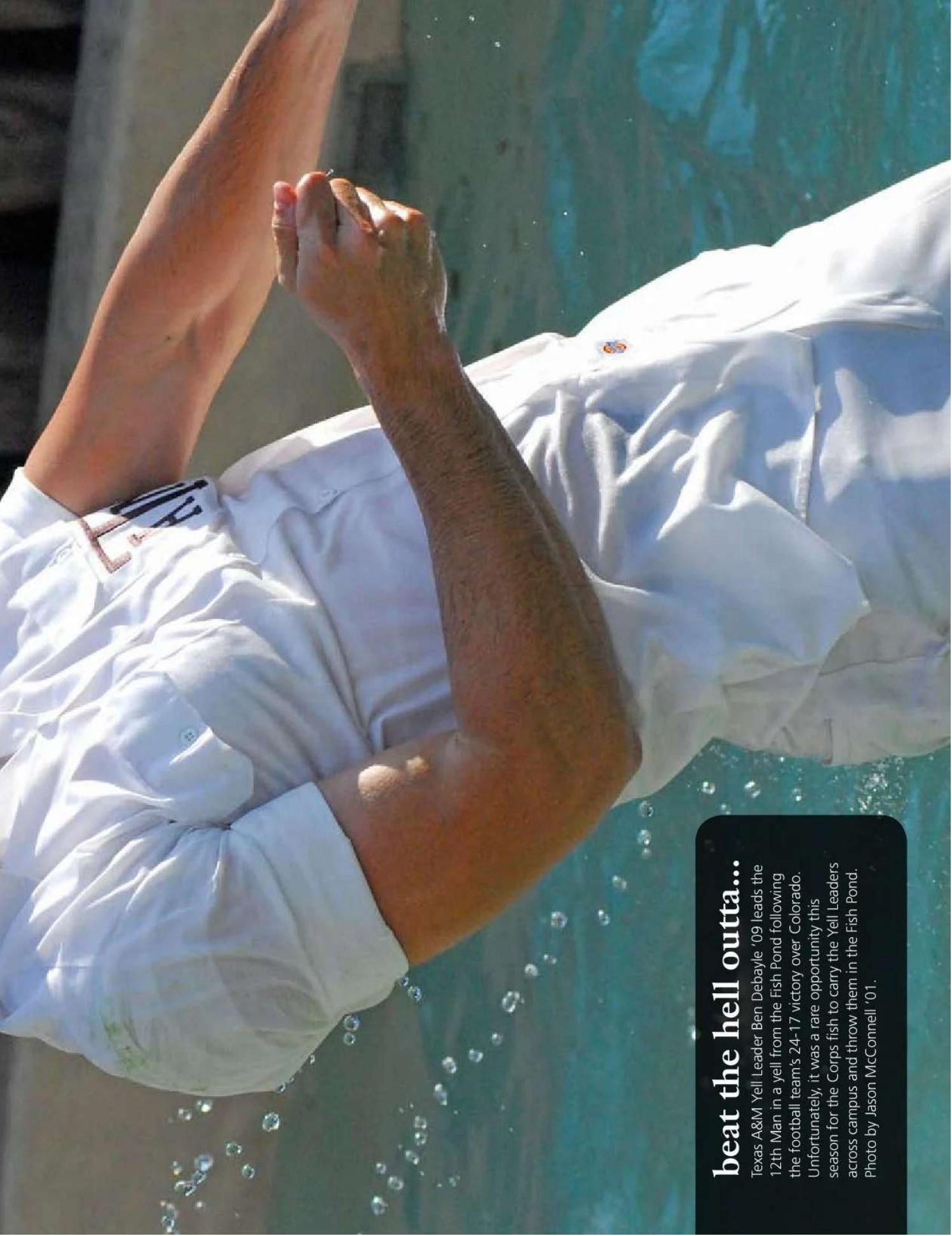
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snapshot



beat the hell outta...

Texas A&M Yell Leader Ben Debayle '09 leads the 12th Man in a yell from the Fish Pond following the football team's 24-17 victory over Colorado. Unfortunately, it was a rare opportunity this season for the Corps fish to carry the Yell Leaders across campus and throw them in the Fish Pond. Photo by Jason McConnell '01.

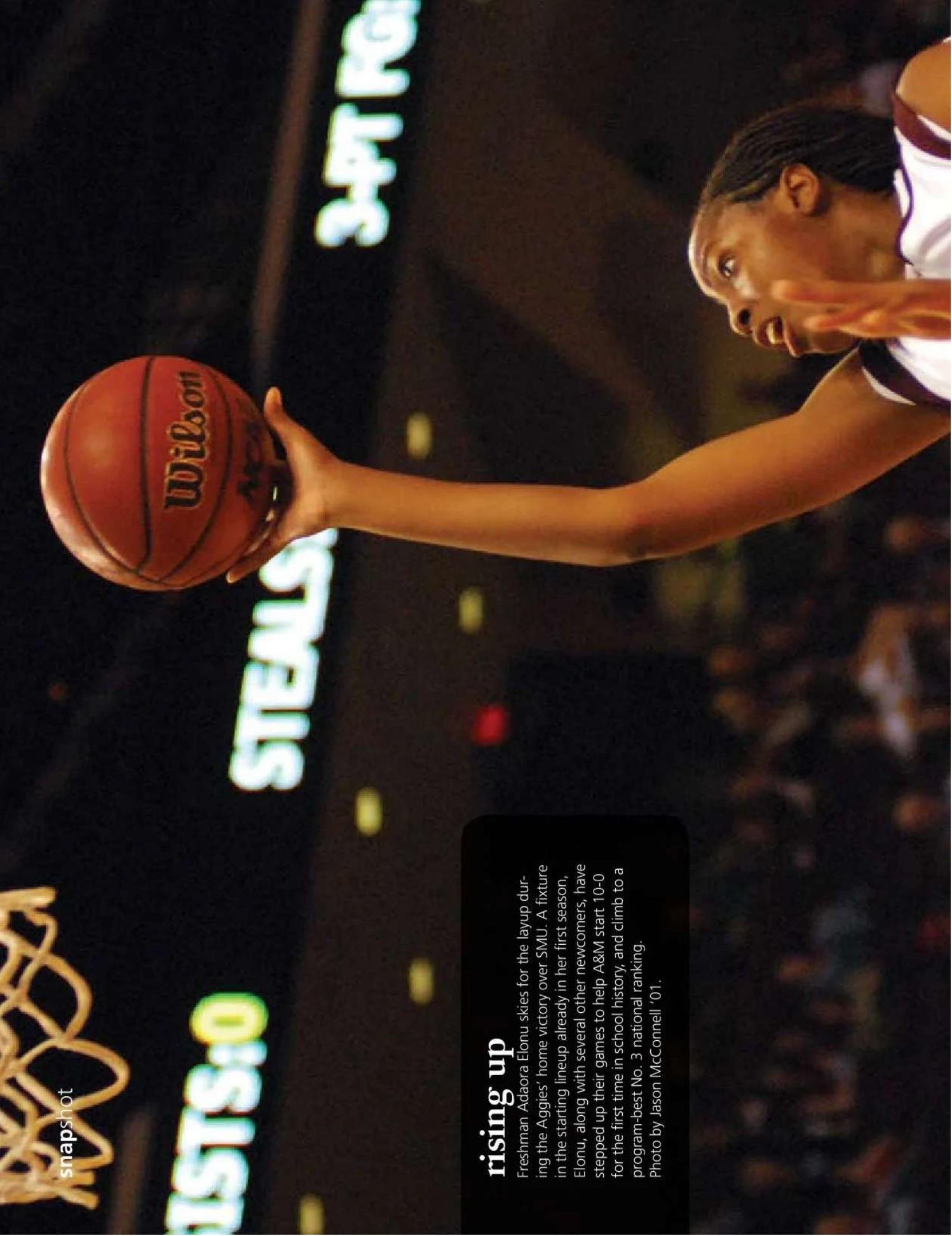
snapshot





reed rally

Aggie players, coaches and fans erupt as the final buzzer sounds, signaling the end to an amazing Texas A&M comeback victory over Arizona in one of the biggest non-conference home games in school history. Nathan Walkup scored a 3-pointer with 20 seconds remaining to give the Aggies their only lead of the game and a 67-66 victory. Photo by Jason McConnell '01.



snapshot

rising up

Freshman Adaora Elonu skies for the layup during the Aggies' home victory over SMU. A fixture in the starting lineup already in her first season, Elonu, along with several other newcomers, have stepped up their games to help A&M start 10-0 for the first time in school history, and climb to a program-best No. 3 national ranking.
Photo by Jason McConnell '01.





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CLOSING OUT THE CLASS

BY JEREMY KSIONDA '04

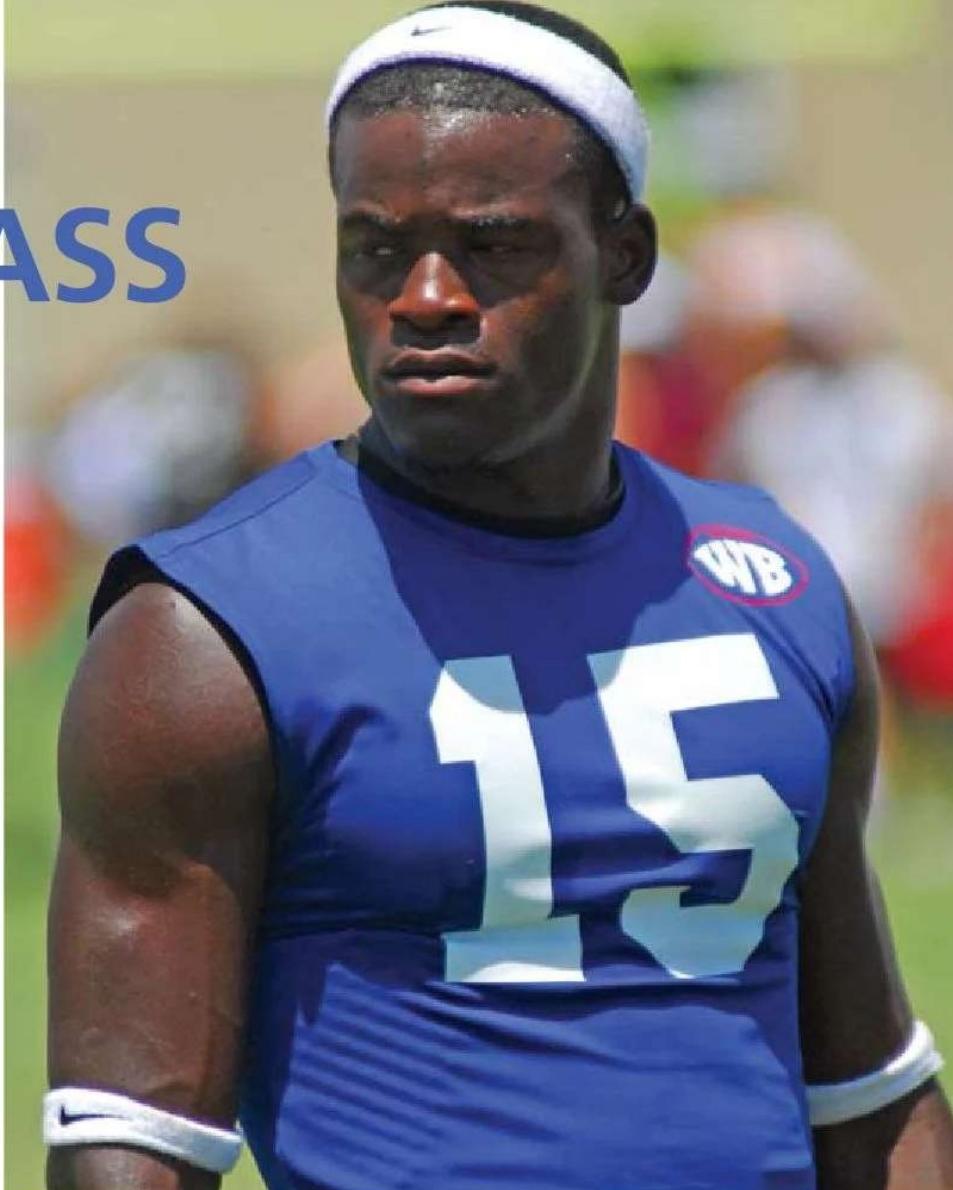
National Signing Day for the college football world is Wednesday, February 4, and the Texas A&M recruiting class of 2009 is nearly complete. With less than a handful of scholarships left to give, the Aggies have honed in on an elite group of prospects to polish things off.

Beaumont West Brook running back Christine Michael (right) is set to announce his decision at the annual Army All-American game in San Antonio on January 3. While nothing is certain until the ink is dry, commitments made on national television tend to stick. According to Billy Liucci, insiders quietly feel confident that the state's top back will choose A&M. If that happens, the Aggies will have landed one of the nation's premier running back prospects.

A thoroughbred in every sense of the word, Michael possesses the size, speed and toughness to carry the ball 25-30 times a game and would make an immediate impact. Christine (pronounced Christian) actually committed to Texas A&M very early in the recruiting process almost a year ago, but decided to hold off on his commitment in order to go through the process and make an informed decision.

The Aggies are also anxiously awaiting the decision of Aldine Eisenhower safety Craig Loston, who has tentatively schedule to announce at the Under Armour All-American game on January 4. Loston, who was also once an A&M commitment, is expected to choose between the Aggies and LSU. Coming off a national championship and having secured the pledge of Loston's cousin and fellow Houston standout Russell Shepard, the Tigers should be regarded as tough to beat. Still, the Aggies have a shot in this race thanks to the relationship built between Loston and ace recruiter Van Malone, as well as his best friend and former high school teammate, Rod Davis, who will be a red-shirt freshman for A&M next season.

A commitment from Loston would vault the Aggies into the national spot-



light and provide an immediate boost to the secondary. Craig is considered the nation's best safety prospect, and would fall in line with former impact defenders and Aggie greats such as Sam Adams, Quentin Coryatt, Kevin Smith and Ty Warren. Those are high comparisons, but Loston is exactly the caliber of prospect needed to bring back the Wrecking Crew.

The third, and likely final high school prospect remaining on the Aggies recruiting class of '09 wish list is Round Rock Stony Point defensive end Tevin Mims. Mims saw his stock rise higher and faster than virtually every high school senior in the state of Texas this fall, as the explosive and disruptive defender led Stony Point deep into the playoffs.

Despite holding a TCU offer for nearly a year, late attention from the Aggies

and Longhorns has caused Mims to put things on hold. Given Texas' proximity to Mims' high school, the Longhorns hold a natural edge over the Aggies and Horned Frogs. However, limited scholarships available could prohibit Texas from extending an offer to the highly sought defensive end, leaving A&M in a favorable position to fill a dire need in this class.

If the Aggies can manage to land two out of the three top remaining prospects, they will likely have added an instant-impact playmaker to both sides of the ball next season. If one of the two happens to be named Craig Loston, it would make waves across the Houston area as the city's top defender would be aligned with the vision and commitment to the future of A&M football. For the Aggies, February 4 can't get here soon enough. AT

MEN'S BASKETBALL SIGNS FOUR



Four high school basketball standouts signed to play for Texas A&M head coach Mark Turgeon during the early signing period. (Left to right) Naji (NAH-gee) Hibbert (Baltimore, MD), Khris Middleton (North Charleston, SC), Kourtney Roberson (Arcadia, LA) and Ray Turner (Houston, TX) will join the Aggies for the 2009-10 season. Hibbert, a 6-5 guard, is ranked No. 59 nationally by ESPN.com. Middleton is a 6-7 forward and one of the best shooters in the country, averaging 21 points and 8.6 rebounds as a junior. Roberson, a 6-9 forward, is the half-brother of Bernard King –Texas A&M's all-time leading scorer. A 6-8 forward out of Jones High School, Turner is regarded as one of the top prospects in Texas.

WOMEN'S CLASS AMONG THE BEST

The Texas A&M women's basketball program landed one of the top recruiting classes in the nation with the signing of four top-rated high school players who will join the Aggies for the 2009-10 season. A&M's heralded recruiting class is comprised of (left to right) six-foot combination guard/forward Cierra Windham from Corona, CA, 6-foot-3 post player Diamond Ashmore from Midwest City, OK, 6-foot-1 wing player Kristi Bellock from River Ridge, LA, and 5-foot-7 point guard Adrienne Pratcher from Memphis, TN.



SOFTBALL SIGNS VERSATILE CLASS



(Corpus Christi, TX) and Sydney Shannon (Marlow, OK) join the Aggies for the 2009-10 season. Dumezich holds high school state records for most shutouts (24), strikeouts (489), home runs (15) and runs scored (69) in a season. May is a catcher and a three-time academic all-district honoree in softball from Klein Oak High School. Schwirtlich is a two-time all-district selection and a two-time CC Caller All-South pick at both shortstop and center field. A catcher and outfielder, Shannon holds school records for the best single season batting average and the most doubles in a season.

BASEBALL CLASS RANKED SIXTH

The back-to-back Big 12 Champion Texas A&M baseball team's 2008 recruiting class was ranked sixth nationally by Baseball America, the publication announced. The 14-member incoming class consists of eight freshmen and six transfers. Infielders: Nick Anders (College Station, TX), Scott Arthur (Spring, TX), Zack Luther (Laguna Niguel, CA), Joe Patterson (Tulsa, OK) and Adam Smith (Spring, TX). Outfielders: Brett Parsons (The Woodlands, TX), Dylan Petrich (Wichita, KS) and Randall Thorpe (Grapevine, TX). Pitchers: Danny Clement (Bartlesville, OK), Tyler Dyer (Deer Park, TX), Ross Hales (Baytown, TX), Chad Sherman (Bullard, TX), Ross Stripling (Southlake, TX) and Estevan Uriegas (Round Rock, TX). **A1**

CLASS OF 2009 AGGIE VERBAL COMMITMENTS

	AARON ARTERBURN (LB) Rockwall (Rockwall, TX) HT: 6-3 WT: 225 <i>Can really close on the football</i>
	STEPHEN BARRERA (OL) Clear Lake (Clear Lake, TX) HT: 6-6 WT: 280 <i>24-5A Second Team All-District DL</i>
	STEVEN CAMPBELL (DB) Jersey Village (Houston, TX) HT: 6-0 WT: 180 <i>17-5A First Team All-District DB</i>
	KIRBY ENNIS (DE) Huntsville (Huntsville, TX) HT: 6-4 WT: 235 <i>18-4A First Team All-District OLB</i>
	DESMOND GARDINER (DB) Port Arthur Memorial (Port Arthur, TX) HT: 5-11 WT: 180 <i>21-5A First Team All-District DB</i>
	KALVIN GUYTON (RB) Lamar (Houston, TX) HT: 5-9 WT: 200 <i>20-5A Offensive Most Valuable Player</i>
	DUSTIN HARRIS (ATH) Livingston (Livingston, TX) HT: 6-2 WT: 175 <i>18-4A Second Team All-District Utility Back</i>
	CHRIS HENDERSON (DT) Carter (Dallas, TX) HT: 6-1 WT: 250 <i>11-5A First Team All-District DL</i>
	BRANDAL JACKSON (WR) Navasota (Navasota, TX) HT: 6-1 WT: 185 <i>His leaping ability is off the charts</i>
	MALCOLM JOHNSON (LB) Jersey Village (Houston, TX) HT: 6-2 WT: 210 <i>Great size, speed and athletic background</i>
	CORYELL JUDIE (DB) Fort Scott CC (KS) (Fort Scott, KS) HT: 5-11 WT: 185 <i>One of the nation's top JUCO cornerbacks</i>
	MICHAEL LAMOTHE (LB) New Iberia (LA) (New Iberia, LA) HT: 6-2 WT: 215 <i>Outstanding versatility and athleticism</i>

For complete coverage of Texas A&M recruiting, contact Billy Liucci of the *Maroon & White Report*, at (979) 690-7361 or by visiting www.agssports.com

	PATRICK LEWIS (OL) East St. John's (LA) HT: 6-2 WT: 290 <i>One of the nation's top interior line recruits</i>
	KENRICK MCNEAL (ATH) Spring (Spring, TX) HT: 6-1 WT: 165 <i>16-5A First Team All-District QB</i>
	CLINT NARON (OL) Klein Oak (Klein, TX) HT: 6-5 WT: 275 <i>Texas Football Super Team OL (1st)</i>
	SPENCER NEALY (DE) Reagan (San Antonio, TX) HT: 6-5 WT: 250 <i>Good athlete at a need position for A&M</i>
	UZOMA NWACHUKWU (WR) Allen (Allen, TX) HT: 6-0 WT: 180 <i>Great hands, acceleration and field vision</i>
	SEAN PORTER (LB) Schertz Clemens (Schertz, TX) HT: 6-2 WT: 205 <i>Tremendous athlete with great quickness</i>
	HUTSON PRIOLEAU (TE) All Saints Episcopal (Fort Worth, TX) HT: 6-5 WT: 230 <i>The state's top-ranked tight end</i>
	RHONTE SCALES (OL) Killeen (Killeen, TX) HT: 6-5 WT: 285 <i>16-4A First Team All-District OL</i>
	JONATHAN STEWART (LB) Shreveport Byrd (LA) (Shreveport, LA) HT: 6-4 WT: 220 <i>Tall, rangy, sideline-to-sideline linebacker</i>
	RYAN SWOPE (ATH) Austin Westlake (Austin, TX) HT: 6-0 WT: 190 <i>5A Honorable Mention All-State RB</i>
	STEVEN TERRELL (DB) Allen (Allen, TX) HT: 5-11 WT: 175 <i>Physical player with great speed</i>
	CHARLIE THOMAS (DB) Beaumont Central (Beaumont, TX) HT: 6-1 WT: 195 <i>22-4A First Team All-District OLB</i>
	COLTON VALENCIA (DB) Fort Bend Hightower (Fort Bend, TX) HT: 5-10 WT: 175 <i>Lockdown corner that hits like a safety</i>
	ANDREW WEAVER (LB) Waco (Waco, TX) HT: 6-3 WT: 225 <i>16-4A First Team All-District DE</i>

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TOP 113 IN 09

Quarterbacks (10)

1	Garrett Gilbert  Committed to Texas	Lake Travis	6-3	185
2	Tyrik Rollison UH, FSU, KU, TCU, AZ	Sulphur Springs	6-2	185
3	Cody Green  Committed to Nebraska	Dayton	6-3	205
4	Ryan Mossakowski  Committed to Kentucky	Frisco Centennial	6-6	210
5	Shevondrick Beaver  Committed to Michigan	Wichita Falls Rider	6-4	200
6	Drew Allen  Committed to Oklahoma	Alamo Heights	6-4	195
7	Jacob Karam  Committed to Texas Tech	Friendswood	6-0	180
8	Kolby Gray BC, CAL, OKS, TT, RICE	Cy Falls	6-2	180
9	Christian Matthews  Committed to Kansas	Bowie	6-4	180
10	Casey Pachall  Committed to TCU	Brownwood	6-4	185

Running Backs (9)

1	Christine Michael A&M, OU, OKS, LSU, TEX	Beaumont Westbrook	5-11	195
2	Dexter Pratt  Committed to LSU	Navasota	6-2	220
3	Stepfan Taylor  Committed to Stanford	Mansfield	6-0	185
4	Knile Davis  Committed to Arkansas	Marshall	6-0	205
5	Kalvin Guyton  Committed to Texas A&M	Houston Lamar	5-9	200
6	Jonathan Miller  Committed to Oklahoma	Naaman Forest	6-0	180
7	Hasan Lipscomb  Committed to Minnesota	Cypress Ridge	5-11	205
8	Toben Opurum	Plano East	6-2	225
9	Jurell Thompson  Committed to TCU	Wichita Falls Rider	5-10	190

Tight Ends (4)

1	Hutson Prioleau  Committed to Texas A&M	All Saints Episcopal	6-5	230
2	Barrett Matthews  Committed to Texas	North Shore	6-2	235
3	Jordan Najvar  Committed to Stanford	Klein Oak	6-6	235
4	Trey Graham  Committed to Texas	Waco Midway	6-5	225

Wide Receivers (13)

1	Greg Timmons  Committed to Texas	Aldine Eisenhower	6-3	195
2	Uzoma Nwachukwu  Committed to Texas A&M	Allen	6-0	180
3	Eric Ward  Committed to Oklahoma	Wichita Falls Rider	5-11	185
4	Brandal Jackson  Committed to Texas A&M	Navasota	6-1	185
5	DeWayne Peace  Committed to Michigan	South Grand Prairie	5-11	170
6	Marquis Goodwin  Committed to Texas	Rowlett	5-9	160
7	Josh Gordon A&M, TCU, MIZ, NEB, TT	Lamar	6-4	210
8	Emory Blake  Committed to Texas Tech	Austin	6-2	200
9	Dameon Smith	Marshall	6-1	205
10	Aaron Fisher  Committed to Texas Tech	Fossil Ridge	6-4	200
11	Jarrod Darden  Committed to Colorado	Keller Central	6-4	210
12	Jazman Reynolds  Committed to Oklahoma	Aldine Eisenhower	6-4	180
13	Chayse Joubert  Committed to SMU	Arlington Grace Prep	6-1	185

Offensive Linemen (16)

1	Mason Walters  Committed to Texas	Frenship	6-8	290
2	Rhonte Scales  Committed to Texas A&M	Killeen	6-5	285
3	Ivory Wade  Committed to Baylor	Dickinson	6-3	285
4	Stavion Lowe  Committed to LSU	Brownwood	6-4	285
5	Stephen Barrera  Committed to Texas A&M	Clear Lake	6-6	280
6	Clint Naron  Committed to Texas A&M	Klein Oak	6-5	275
7	Thomas Ashcraft  Committed to Texas	Cedar Hill	6-5	280
8	Garrett Porter  Committed to Texas	Odessa Permian	6-6	300
9	Ty Horn  Committed to TCU	Waco Midway	6-5	270
10	Kyle Clark  Committed to Texas Tech	Denton Guyer	6-4	270
11	Joel Gray  Committed to Texas Tech	Hebron	6-6	285
12	Josh Aladenoye  Committed to Oklahoma	North Mesquite	6-5	300
13	Paden Kelley  Committed to Texas	Lake Travis	6-6	265
14	Michael Brown  Committed to Ole Miss	Lexington	6-5	295
15	Jesse Coffey  Committed to Nebraska	Denton Guyer	6-7	270
16	Bobby Janisch  Committed to Rice	Houston Jersey Village	6-6	290

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Defensive Tackles (8)

1	Jamarcus McFarland <small>A&M, TEX, OU, LSU, OKS</small>	Lufkin	6-3	280
2	Chris Henderson <small>ATM Committed to Texas A&M</small>	Dallas Carter	6-1	250
3	Calvin Howell <small>Committed to Texas</small>	San Antonio Warren	6-4	270
4	James Dunbar <small>TCU Committed to TCU</small>	Maud	6-6	290
5	Kyles Kriegel <small>Committed to Texas</small>	Elysian Fields	6-5	235
6	Nosa Eguea <small>PP Committed to Colorado</small>	Mansfield Summit	6-2	245
7	Bryant House <small>TCU Committed to TCU</small>	Maud	6-4	265
8	Thaddeus Randle <small>N Committed to Nebraska</small>	Northshore	6-1	250

Linebackers (13)

1	Thomas Wort <small>NU Committed to Oklahoma</small>	New Braunfels	6-1	210
2	Tariq Allen <small>Committed to Texas</small>	Irving MacArthur	6-2	230
3	Brandon Mahoney <small>Committed to Oklahoma</small>	Fossil Ridge	6-2	210
4	Sean Porter <small>ATM Committed to Texas A&M</small>	Schertz Clemens	6-2	205
5	Chris Williams <small>N Committed to Nebraska</small>	Abilene	6-1	205
6	Andrew Weaver <small>ATM Committed to Texas A&M</small>	Waco	6-3	225
7	Malcolm Johnson <small>ATM Committed to Texas A&M</small>	Klein Collins	6-2	210
8	Chris McAllister	Converse Junction	6-2	210
9	Patrick Nkwopara <small>Committed to Texas</small>	South Grand Prairie	5-11	195
10	Austin Moss <small>Committed to Arkansas</small>	South Garland	6-2	205
11	Tanner Brock <small>TCU Committed to TCU</small>	Copperas Cove	6-3	205
12	Rod Goodlow <small>N Committed to Northwestern</small>	Dallas Adamson	6-2	205
13	James Scott <small>Committed to Texas Tech</small>	Coldspring	6-3	220

Defensive Ends (9)

1	Michael Brockers <small>Committed to LSU</small>	Houston Chavez	6-3	230
2	Alex Okafor <small>Committed to Texas</small>	Pflugerville	6-4	220
3	Dominique Jones <small>Committed to Texas</small>	Kilgore	6-3	230
4	Terrance Lloyd <small>Committed to Missouri</small>	Houston Stratford	6-4	220
5	Kirby Ennis <small>ATM Committed to Texas A&M</small>	Huntsville	6-4	235
6	Rico Forbes <small>F Committed to Baylor</small>	St. Pius	6-5	255
7	Brandon Henderson <small>Committed to SMU</small>	Abilene Cooper	6-3	225
8	Josh Skinner <small>Committed to Rice</small>	Silsbee	6-5	225
9	Kerry Hyder <small>T Committed to Texas Tech</small>	Austin LBJ	6-3	230

Defensive Backs (20)

1	Craig Loston <small>A&M, LSU</small>	Aldine Eisenhower	6-3	185
2	Kevin Brent <small>NU Committed to Oklahoma</small>	South Oak Cliff	6-0	210
3	Steve Williams <small>NU Committed to Oklahoma</small>	Dallas Skyline	5-10	160
4	Marcus Davis <small>Committed to Texas</small>	Clear Creek	6-1	180
5	Eryon Barnett <small>Committed to Texas</small>	Euless Trinity	6-2	180
6	Steven Terrell <small>ATM Committed to Texas A&M</small>	Allen	5-11	175
7	A.J. Dugat <small>TCU Committed to TCU</small>	Dayton	6-1	195
8	Colton Valencia <small>ATM Committed to Texas A&M</small>	Fort Bend Hightower	5-10	175
9	Charlie Thomas <small>ATM Committed to Texas A&M</small>	Beaumont Central	6-1	195
10	Kenny Vaccaro <small>Committed to Texas</small>	Brownwood	6-0	175
11	Will Ford <small>UT Committed to Texas Tech</small>	Abilene Cooper	6-1	190
12	Stephen Campbell <small>ATM Committed to Texas A&M</small>	Jersey Village	6-0	180
13	Marcus Trice <small>NU Committed to Oklahoma</small>	Mesquite	5-8	170
14	Desmond Gardiner <small>ATM Committed to Texas A&M</small>	Port Arthur Memorial	5-11	180
15	Terrance Bullitt <small>UT Committed to Texas Tech</small>	Naaman Forest	6-3	180
16	Eddie Foster	Colleyville Heritage	6-0	175
17	Yahshua Williams <small>UT Committed to Texas Tech</small>	Denton Ryan	6-3	185
18	Dele Junaid <small>Committed to Ole Miss</small>	Fort Bend Hightower	6-2	185
19	Dexter Linton <small>Committed to Kansas</small>	Arlington Bowie	6-0	185
20	Thomas Bates <small>UT Committed to Houston</small>	Baytown Lee	5-11	180

Athletes (11)

1	Russell Shepard <small>LSU Committed to LSU</small>	Cy Ridge	6-2	195
2	Chris Whaley <small>Committed to Texas</small>	Madisonville	6-2	205
3	Ryan Swope <small>ATM Committed to Texas A&M</small>	Austin Westlake	6-0	190
4	Darius Jones <small>NU Committed to Oklahoma</small>	Marshall	6-0	180
5	Rex Burkhead <small>N Committed to Nebraska</small>	Plano	6-0	190
6	Kenric McNeal <small>ATM Committed to Texas A&M</small>	Spring	6-1	165
7	Dustin Harris <small>ATM Committed to Texas A&M</small>	Livingston	6-2	175
8	A.J. Highsmith <small>UT Committed to Miami</small>	Fort Bend Hightower	6-0	185
9	Richard Morrison <small>ATM Committed to Arizona</small>	Royse City	6-0	170
10	Charles Ross <small>Committed to Rice</small>	Schertz-Clemens	6-1	195
11	Broderick Jackson <small>UT Committed to Rice</small>	Kirbyville	5-11	200

This list is current as of December 19, 2008. Sign up for the Maroon & White Report at www.agssports.com to get recruiting news as it happens.

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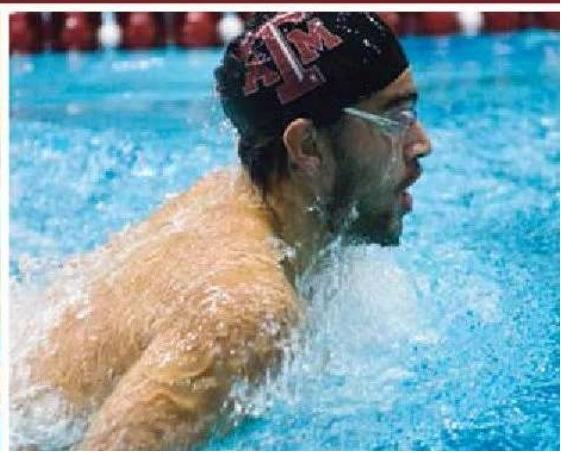
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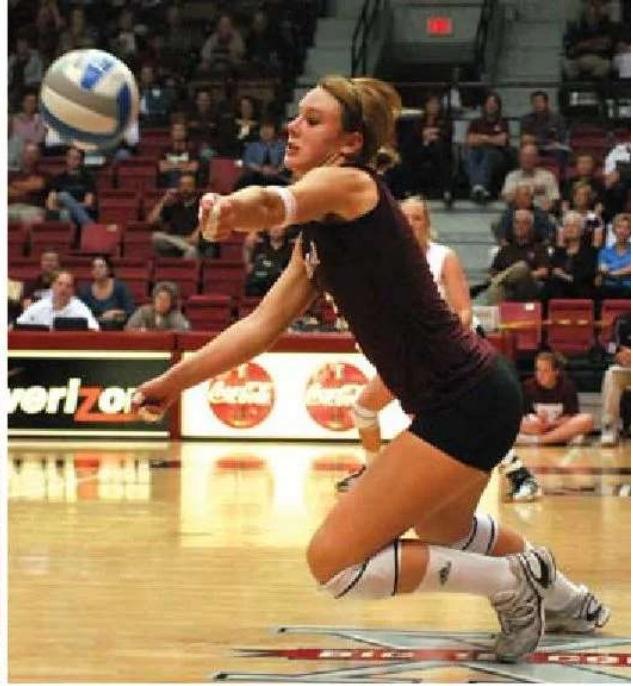
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(soccer) After graduating some of the best players in school history last year, it was not much of a surprise to see the Aggie soccer program's dominating run of four consecutive Big 12 titles end this season. But in what was supposed to be a rebuilding year, the young squad served notice to the rest of the league that they weren't going to fall far, barely finishing second to Oklahoma State with a conference record of 7-2-1. After a disappointing one-game exit from the Big 12 Tournament, the Aggies again exceeded expectations with an amazing run in the NCAA Tournament. For only the fourth time in school history, the team reached the Elite Eight before falling in double overtime to the eventual national champions, North Carolina. Texas A&M finished the season ranked seventh in the nation, and the "rebuilding year" turned out to be a season that most programs would dream of. **(swimming)** The Texas A&M women's swimming and diving team earned a second place finish while the men's team placed fifth in the 2008 Art Adamson Invitational at the Student Rec Center in November. Aggie senior Triin Aljand wowed the crowd each day of the event, putting together one of the greatest individual meets by a female sprinter in NCAA history, producing times that rank, or would have ranked, her among the top five in NCAA history in all three of her primary events.



scoreboard | volleyball



With their backs against the wall, the Aggie volleyball team closed the regular season on a tear, winning their final six matches. There was a definite playoff atmosphere during that amazing stretch, with the team knowing that one more loss would end their postseason hopes. Despite their remarkable finish, which saw them climb to a tie for fourth place in the Big 12, the Aggies were snubbed by the NCAA selection committee for the second consecutive year. For a program that has now failed to reach the postseason in the last three years, motivation is sure to be at an all-time high to not give the committee any reasons to leave the Aggies home next season.





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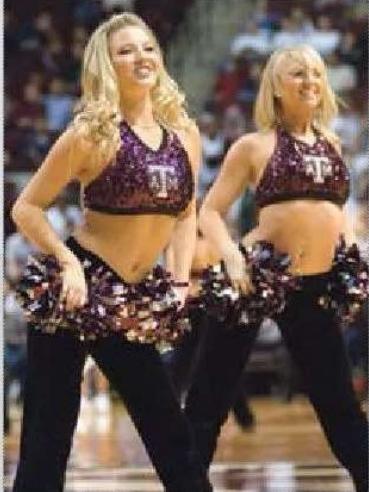
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Aggies 1876

scoreboard | january/february calendar

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28 Sam Houston (m) 7 pm	29 New Mexico (w) 7 pm	30 @Rice 3 pm (m)	31 jan 1		2	3 G Wash 5 pm (w) McNeese 8 pm (m)
4 @FSU 6 pm (w) North Dakota (m) 7 pm	5	6	7	8	9	10 @SMU 1 pm (w) @Missouri 5 pm (w) @OSU 8 pm (m)
11	12 Texas Tech (w) 7 pm	13 Baylor 8:30 pm (m)	14	15	16 Houston 5 pm (w)	17 Oklahoma (m) 1 pm
18 @Oklahoma (w) 3 pm	19 @Kansas 8 pm (m)	20 Baylor 7 pm (w)	21	22	23 Texas TBA (w)	24 Denver 1 pm (w) @OSU 6 pm (w) @Texas 7 pm (m) LSU TBA (mw)
25 Radford 1 pm (m)			28 @Texas 7 pm (w) Texas Tech (m) 8 pm	29	30 SMU TBA (m) NC State (m) (Florida) TBA	31 @S Car 9 am @St. Mary's (w) 10 am OSU 1 pm (m) Kansas 4 pm (w) @Fla/Ariz TBA (m)
feb 1 USC or Michigan (LA) TBA	National Signing Day		4 @Iowa State (w) 7 pm @Oklahoma (m) 8 pm	5	6 Tulsa 1 pm (w) UTSA 3:30 pm (w) @Texas 6 pm (m) Texas Cup 6 pm (m) Auburn 6 pm (w)	7 Baylor 10 am Aub/FSU 10 am (w) Tulsa 1 pm (w) Kansas St 3 pm (m) UTSA 3:30 pm (w)
8 LSU 1 pm (w) Nebraska 2 pm (w)	9 @Northrop Gruuman Regional Challenge All Day	10 @NGRC All Day (w)	11 @NGRC All Day (w) @Sam Houston (w) 4:30 pm @Texas Tech (w) 7 pm	12	13 Sam Houston (Baton Rouge) 3:30 pm	14 Ohio St 12 pm (w) @LSU 2 pm (w) Colorado 2 pm (w) @Baylor 5 pm (m)
15 Bracket Play (Baton Rouge) TBA	16 Texas 8 pm (m)	17	18 @John A. Burns Invitational TBA @TCU 6 pm (m) @Texas State (w) 6 pm	19 @JBI TBA (m)	20 Kansas State 10 am N Illinois (Houston) 11 am Prairie View (Houston) 1 pm Wright State (m) 6:35 pm @JBI TBA (m)	21 Texas 11 am (w) @Duke 11 am (w) McNeese 1 pm (w) Wright State (m) 1 pm/4 pm @Texas Tech (m) 5 pm @Houston (w) 5 pm

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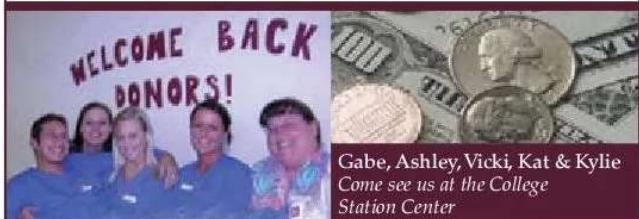
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CHRYSLER



"People have told me that I look like a giraffe because I have a long neck. I'd rather be something fierce like a lion."



nate **WALKUP**

Fifteen questions for the Aggies' sophomore sharpshooter BY AI STAFF

Do you have a nickname?

People call me Nate. My friends call me "Nate-Dog." Back home they call me "Walk."

What's your favorite place to study?

I do a lot of studying in my room, but being in the business school, we always go to Club West Campus Library – "Club Dub C.L." is what we call it. We have a big group that studies together over there.

What's the best place to take a girl on a date?

Johnny Carino's and Olive Garden are pretty good choices – or any nice restaurant. Movies are always good. Astronomy class is a really nice one too – free dates!

Who is your favorite movie character?

Tommy Boy. Chris Farley as Tommy Boy is awesome.

What's your dream vacation?

A two-week trip through Europe or a relaxing vacation in Maui.

Do you cook?

Not much. I live with BD [Bryan Davis] and Denzel [Bowles]. BD is the cook of the house. He makes anything from fried chicken to Hamburger Helper.

Who do you look up to?

I look up to a lot of my friends because they are always so supportive. I look up to my parents. They are the ones who are always there. They both graduated from A&M. They've taught me everything in life and have given me so much inspiration. They are at all of the games. My dad coached me my whole life. He doesn't do a lot of coaching anymore, but he is always so excited when I see him after games and he hates when he has to miss one. Their love and support for me to play is very inspirational. And my little brothers too. They are like kids in a candy store every game.

If you were a superhero, what superhero would you be?

Superman, Batman, Spiderman – they are all good. Superman can fly. He might be the most dominant so I'm going to have to roll with him.

Do you have any phobias?

I'm really scared of heights and I don't like roller coasters. I don't mind driving fast, but I hate roller coasters.

If you were an animal, what type of animal would you be?

I would want to be a lion – the king of the jungle. People have told me that I look like a giraffe because I have a long neck. I've also been called a moccasin before. I'd rather be something fierce like a lion. But I'm goofy so that fits a giraffe too.

Who are the three celebrities you'd most like to meet?

Michael Phelps – a lot of people say I have similarities to him, like a goofy smile. Michael Jordan or LeBron James because I'd like to meet a basketball player who has been considered one of the best. And Tiger Woods. He's one of my idols too.

What do you remember most from high school basketball?

It would have to be my coach – Billy Carlisle. He taught me a lot about the game. He was a very special person. During my junior year, I played probably the best game I ever played for him against our district rival North Shore. That night after the game he went into cardiac arrest and died. I will always remember that night. I guess the game was so intense that it was too much on his heart. Every moment I ever spent with him was really special.

What's your favorite A&M tradition?

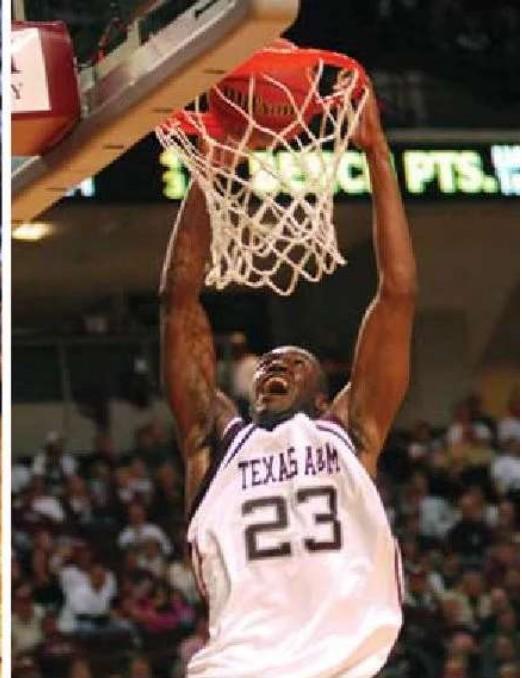
I really like the yells. I don't get to do them at basketball games of course, but I did at all the football games. Silver Taps is really special too. I like saying "Howdy!" – I'm one of the few guys on the team who says it.

In one word, how would you describe Coach Turgeon?

Passionate.

Who would win a game of H-O-R-S-E between you and Tyra White?

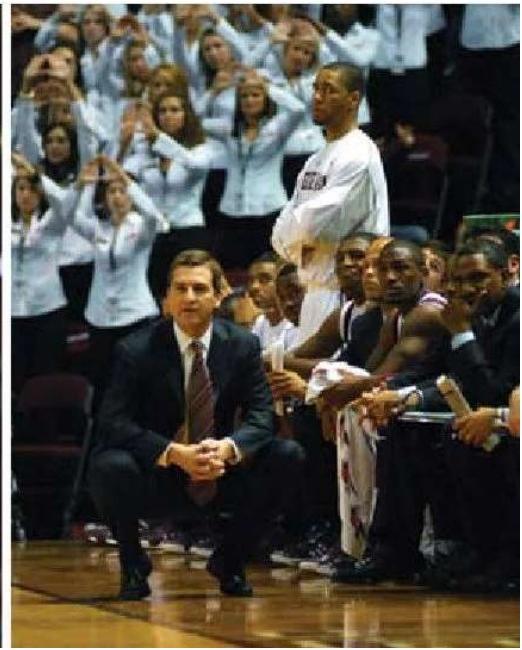
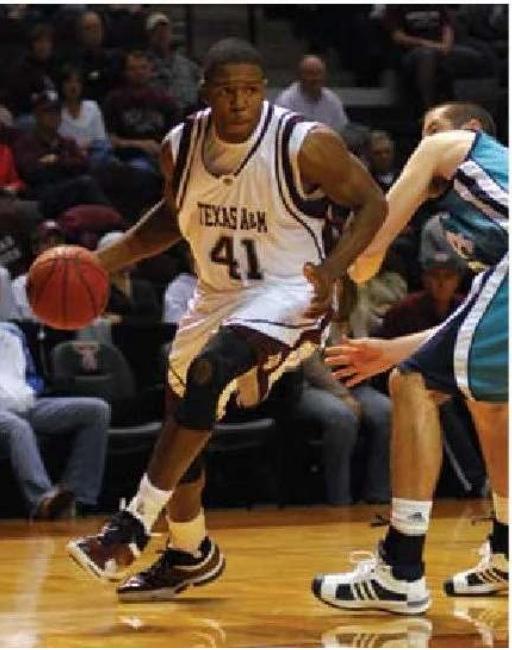
Tyra can shoot. You don't mess with those All-Americans. It would be a close one – back and forth maybe. I guess I have to go with Tyra. **A1**



After winning five of their first six games of the season, including three of four in the South Padre Invitational, the A&M men's basketball team hosted Arizona for a rare big-time non-conference game at Reed Arena. The atmosphere was electric as the Aggies defeated the Wildcats 67-66 despite trailing all but 20 seconds in the game. Nate Walkup became an instant fan favorite with his game-winning 3-pointer off the bench.

The Aggies posted another memorable win in their next contest, this time on the road against Alabama in overtime. Three victories later, including a triumph over previously unbeaten LSU in Houston, the Ags head into the home stretch of their non-conference games with their eyes on a daunting Big 12 schedule. Road games against Oklahoma State, Kansas and Texas and home matchups against Baylor and Oklahoma highlight the first two weeks of a brutal conference schedule. If A&M can make it through those games with a winning record, the outlook for the rest of the season will be bright. **A1**

JASON MCCONNELL '01



01.10.09 STILLWATER
01.31.09 COLLEGE STATION



LAST MEETING:
Cowboys 59 – Aggies 54 (College Station)

HEAD COACH:
Travis Ford (1st year) 0-0 in Big 12

WHO TO WATCH:
#5 Terrel Harris (G) 6-5, Sr.
Shooting over .500 from both the floor and from 3-point range.

#00 Byron Eaton (G) 5-11, Sr.
Only returning player in Big 12 Conference with 100 or more assists and more than 60 steals.

01.14.09 COLLEGE STATION
02.14.09 WACO



LAST MEETING:
Aggies 71 – Bears 57 (Waco)

HEAD COACH:
Scott Drew (6th year) 21-59 in Big 12

WHO TO WATCH:
#0 Curtis Jerrells (G) 6-1, Sr.
Preseason All-Big 12 First Team selection is only the 20th player in Baylor history to eclipse 1,000 career points.

#23 Kevin Rogers (F) 6-9, Sr.
Leads the team in rebounds averaging 7 per game with 8 blocks per game.

01.19.09 LAWRENCE



LAST MEETING:
Jayhawks 77 – Aggies 71 (Kansas City)

HEAD COACH:
Bill Self (6th year) 64-16 in Big 12

WHO TO WATCH:
#4 Sherron Collins (G) 5-11, Jr.
Preseason All-Big 12 selection is the leading returning scorer averaging almost 18 points and 5 assists per game.

#45 Cole Aldrich (C) 6-11, So.
Leads the team with almost 10.5 rebounds per game and 24 blocks.

01.24.09 AUSTIN
02.16.09 COLLEGE STATION



LAST MEETING:
Aggies 50 – Longhorns 77 (Austin)

HEAD COACH:
Rick Barnes (8th year) 120-40 in Big 12

WHO TO WATCH:
#3 A.J. Abrams (G) 5-11, Sr.
Team leader with 21 ppg. Shooting .447 from the floor and .474 from the arc.

#5 Damion James (G/F) 6-7, Jr.
Set a single season rebounding record with 393 last year. Averaging almost 8 per game this season.

02.07.09 COLLEGE STATION



LAST MEETING:
Wildcats 60 – Aggies 63 (Kansas City)

HEAD COACH:
Frank Martin (2nd year) 10-6 in Big 12

WHO TO WATCH:
#0 Jacob Pullen (G) 6-0, So.
Only returning starter leads the team in steals, assists and scoring, averaging over 15 points per game.

#23 Dominique Sutton (G) 6-5, So.
Shooting over .500 from the floor with more than 5 rebounds per game.

02.24.09 LINCOLN



LAST MEETING:
Huskers 65 – Aggies 59 (College Station)

HEAD COACH:
Doc Sadler (3rd year) 13-19 in Big 12

WHO TO WATCH:
#4 Steve Harvey (G) 5-11, Sr.
Leads the team with 12.6 points per game shooting over .450 from the floor.

#11 Ade Dagunduro (G) 6-5, Sr.
Consistent player, averaging almost 3.5 rebounds and 7 points per game, with 7 steals.

03.04.09 BOULDER



LAST MEETING: Buffaloes 69 – Aggies 86 (College Station)

HEAD COACH: Jeff Bzdelik (2nd year) 3-13 in Big 12

WHO TO WATCH:
#11 Cory Higgins (G) 6-5, So.
Top returning scorer, averaging a team-leading 6 boards and 18 ppg.

#12 Dwight Thorne II (G) 6-3, Sr.
Shooting over .600 from the floor and .455 from behind the arc.

03.07.09 COLLEGE STATION



LAST MEETING: Aggies 77 – Tigers 69 (Columbia)

HEAD COACH: Mike Anderson (3rd year) 13-19 in Big 12

WHO TO WATCH:
#1 DeMarre Carroll (F) 6-8, Sr.
Almost .600 from the floor with 7.3 rebounds and 18 points per game.

#5 Leo Lyons (F) 6-9, Sr.
Almost .550 from the floor with 7.3 rebounds, getting 17.4 ppg.

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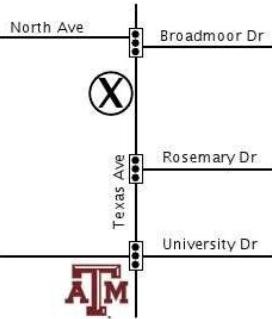
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tyra WHITE

Fifteen questions for the Aggies' freshman phenom BY AI STAFF

Let's go back to last season when you got hurt. What was the first thing that went through your mind the moment it happened?

I was just shocked. At first I was going to shoot a jumpshot, but then I decided to drive and after I went up for a layup, I came down on the baseline opposite of our bench and felt a pop. I immediately started hoping it wasn't my ACL.

When did you find out that your season was over?

On the bus home I knew something was wrong, but I hoped it was just a bad sprain. I had an MRI done the following Monday. On that Wednesday, they told me it was my ACL, and I just started crying. I wanted to play so bad.

Who helped you get back on your feet?

My teammates, especially my roommates Sydney [Colson] and Maryann [Baker]. They put my shoes on and tied them for me. Radar [trainer Mike Ricke] helped me a lot as well as our strength and conditioning coach, Jen [Jones].

How exciting is it to be back on the court this season?

It is really exciting just to be out there playing in a great atmosphere, hearing your name called when you make a shot.

Why did you come to Texas A&M?

The tradition. The family away from home – all the girls are the sisters I never had. Plus, I always wanted to live in Texas and figured this was my opportunity.

Do you have a nickname?

Too many. "Ta Ta." Five of us are nicknamed "T" so when someone yells "T" we all look. Coach Blair calls me "Sleepy" because he says I move slow.

If you were a superhero, what superhero would you be?

I like Super Mario.

Do you cook?

A friend of mine comes over and we cook for my teammates sometimes. Kelsey [Assarian] loves our cornbread.

"Everyone is going to laugh. I'm still in kids shoes. I wear a 7 in big kids. Everyone wonders why I have so many shoes, and it's because they are cheap."



What's your shoe size?

Oh man. Everyone is going to laugh. I'm still in kids shoes.

I wear a 7 in big kids. Everyone wonders why I have so many shoes, and it's because they are cheap. My teammates make fun of my little feet sometimes. One time, Coach Bond didn't believe a pair of shoes were mine because they were so small.

If you were an animal, what type of animal would you be?

A cheetah. I love cheetahs.

What's your favorite food?

Meatloaf and mashed potatoes. Or fried catfish.

What's your favorite movie?

He Got Game.

What's your favorite A&M tradition?

Doing the Aggie War Hymn after winning games.

In one word, how would you describe Coach Blair?

Hmm... there are so many. Knowledge. He knows so much about the game. He teaches us so much. He told me he was going to give me some tough love this year, so I've been getting that every day.

Who would win a game of H-O-R-S-E between you and Nate Walkup?

I would. Nate is pretty good though. **AI**



01.10.09 COLUMBIA

LAST MEETING:
Tigers 39 – Aggies 65 (Kansas City)

HEAD COACH:
Cindy Stein (11th year) 59-85 in Big 12

WHO TO WATCH:
#12 Alyssa Hollins (G) 5-11, Sr.
 Team leader in steals (24), assists (26), rebounds (7.1) and points per game (14.6).
#4 Jessra Johnson (F) 6-1, Jr.
 Second on the team with 23 assists and 14.2 ppg while hitting .826 from the free-throw line.

01.13.09 COLLEGE STATION
02.11.09 LUBBOCK

LAST MEETING:
Red Raiders 56 – Aggies 70 (College Station)

HEAD COACH:
Kristy Curry (3rd year) 10-22 in Big 12

WHO TO WATCH:
#41 Dominic Seals (F) 6-2, Sr.
 Averaging a team leading 13 points and almost 8 boards per game, along with 13 blocks and 12 steals.
#3 Maria Moore (G) 5-5, Sr.
 Shooting a team high .364 from behind the arc with 36 assists and 12 steals.

01.18.09 NORMAN
02.23.09 COLLEGE STATION

LAST MEETING:
Sooners 59 – Aggies 73 (College Station)

HEAD COACH:
Sherri Coale (13th year) 121-71 in Big 12

WHO TO WATCH:
#3 Courtney Paris (C) 6-4, Sr.
 All-American and Big 12 POY, she led the nation in rebounds last year. Team leader in points (16) and rebounds (13.5) per game.
#5 Ashley Paris (F) 6-3, Sr.
 Number two on the team to her twin sister, with 15 points and 10.6 rebounds per game.

01.21.09 COLLEGE STATION
03.07.09 WACO

LAST MEETING:
Bears 53 – Aggies 72 (College Station)

HEAD COACH:
Kim Mulkey (9th year) 87-41 in Big 12

WHO TO WATCH:
#11 Danielle Wilson (C) 6-3, Jr.
 Good on both ends. Shooting a team high .513 from the floor as well as team high 8 rebounds per game with 34 blocks.
#14 Rachel Allison (F) 6-1, Sr.
 Leads team with 15 points per game. Shooting a team high .478 from the 3-point line.

01.24.09 STILLWATER
03.05.09 COLLEGE STATION

LAST MEETING:
Cowboys 59 – Aggies 64 (Kansas City)

HEAD COACH:
Kurt Budke (3rd year) 19-27 in Big 12

WHO TO WATCH:
#10 Andrea Riley (G) 5-5, Jr.
 An AP All-American, averaging a team high 20 points per game with team high in steals (15) and assists (51).
#32 Shaunté Smith (F) 6-0, Sr.
 Best rebounder on the team, averaging 8.6 per game along with 11.3 points per game.

01.28.09 AUSTIN
02.21.09 COLLEGE STATION

LAST MEETING:
Aggies 65 – Longhorns 50 (Austin)

HEAD COACH:
Gail Goestenkors (2nd year) 7-9 in Big 12

WHO TO WATCH:
#10 Brittainey Raven (G) 6-0, Jr.
 Best shooter on the team, averaging a team high 16.5 ppg while shooting over .500 from the floor and three point line.
#35 Ashley Lindsey (F) 6-4, Sr.
 Averaging over 7 ppg with almost 5 rebounds per game and a team high 30 blocks.

01.31.09 COLLEGE STATION



LAST MEETING:
Aggies 58 – Jayhawks 51 (Lawrence)

HEAD COACH:
Bonnie Hendrickson (5th year) 18-46 in Big 12

WHO TO WATCH:
#4 Danielle McCray (G/F) 5-11, Jr.
 Averaging 20 points per game and 8.5 rebounds per game, both team highs.
#13 Taylor McIntosh (F) 5-11, Sr.
 Consistent on both ends of the floor, averaging 13 ppg with 9 blocks and a team high 18 steals.

02.04.09 AMES



LAST MEETING:
Cyclones 53 – Aggies 65 (Kansas City)

HEAD COACH:
Bill Fennelly (14th year) 117-91 in Big 12

WHO TO WATCH:
#4 Alison Lacey (G) 6-0, Jr.
 Preseason All-Big 12 honorable mention selection is the floor general, leading the team in assists, steals and rebounds.
#15 Heather Ezell (G) 5-9, Sr.
 Leads the team in scoring averaging over 11 points per game.

02.08.09 COLLEGE STATION



LAST MEETING:
Aggies 60 – Huskers 73 (Lincoln)

HEAD COACH:
Connie Yori (7th year) 43-53 in Big 12

WHO TO WATCH:
#40 Cory Montgomery (F) 6-2, Jr.
 Standout on both ends of the court, with team highs in points (14.7) and rebounds (8) per game.
#22 Yvonne Turner (G) 5-8, Jr.
 Consistent player, averaging almost 11 points per game with a team high 26 steals.

02.14.09 COLLEGE STATION



LAST MEETING: Aggies 72 – Buffaloes 68 (Boulder)

HEAD COACH: Kathy McConnell-Miller (4th year) 15-33 in Big 12

WHO TO WATCH:
#22 Brittany Spears (F) 6-1, So.
 Averaging over 20 points and 8 boards with a team high 6 blocks.
#1 Alyssa Fressle (G) 5-10, Fr.
 Averaging 9.1 ppg, and leads the team in assists (23) and steals (19).

03.01.09 MANHATTAN



LAST MEETING: Wildcats 67 – Aggies 54 (College Station)

HEAD COACH: Deb Patterson (13th year) 104-88 in Big 12

WHO TO WATCH:
#4 Ashley Sweat (F) 6-2, Jr.
 Best shooter (.520 from the floor) for a team leading 15 ppg.
#5 Shalee Lehning (G) 5-9, Sr.
 Preseason All-Big 12 selection leads team in rebounds, assists and steals.



JASON MCCONNELL '01

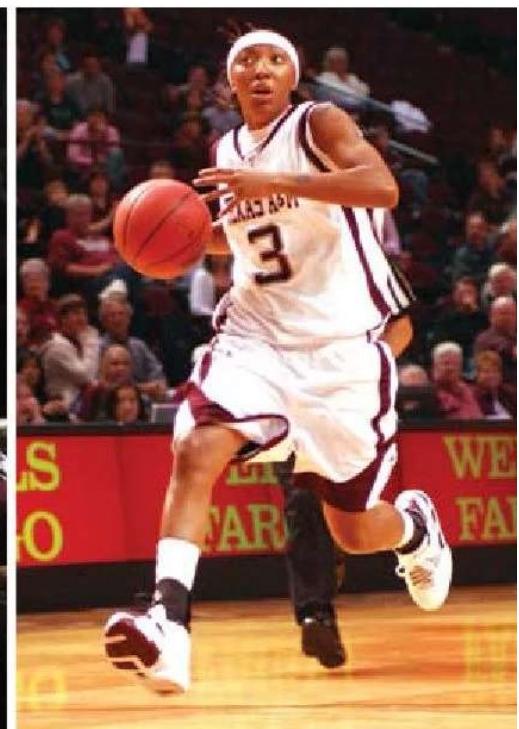


After a season opening victory at home over Mercer, the Texas A&M women's basketball team hit the road for a tough five-game stretch outside of Texas. Despite some close games, the Aggies returned to the state unbeaten.

A historic night in Nacogdoches followed, as A&M routed SFA claiming its best start in school history at 7-0. Head coach Gary Blair, who coached the Ladyjacks from 1985-93, was inducted into the school's Hall of Fame at halftime. Three home victories later, the Aggies have improved their school-record start to 10-0 and have climbed to a program-best No. 3 national ranking.

With three games to go before conference play begins, the team is showing it has what it takes to make it back to back to back Big 12 titles. That will be no easy task, however, because the conference is loaded with elite teams. Texas is undefeated at No. 4 in the nation while Oklahoma is 5th. Baylor, Iowa State, Kansas State and Oklahoma State are not too far behind, proving that any team is capable of capturing the conference crown this season.

Picked to finish 5th in the conference before the season began, the Aggies should be motivated to prove the naysayers wrong. **ATI**



2008 FIGHTIN' TEXAS AGGIE FOOTBALL:
NOVEMBER REWIND



COLORADO

W
AGS 24, BUFFALOES 17

The Aggie defense was the story in Texas A&M's last win of the season as they tied a season low in points allowed and forced three turnovers along the way. The Ags trailed 10-3 at halftime, but a 21-point outburst in the third quarter put the game out of reach. Freshmen Jeff Fuller and Ryan Tannehill combined for 11 catches for 175 yards and three touchdowns.

AI KEY PERFORMER:
DB Trent Hunter – 3 tackles,
2 interceptions

OKLAHOMA

L
SOONERS 66, AGS 28

Unfortunately, Senior Day at Kyle Field did not turn out like the Aggies' hoped when the eventual Big 12 Champion Sooners rolled into town. The A&M offense and defense were unable to keep up with OU from the start, but true freshman Cyrus Gray was a bright spot, setting an A&M record with 261 kick return yards on the day including a 98-yard return for a touchdown.

AI KEY PERFORMER:
RB/KR Cyrus Gray – Kick Returns: 7-
261 yards, 1 TD; Rushing: 5-24



AT BAYLOR

L
BEARS 41, AGS 21

In a must-win situation to keep their slim bowl hopes alive, the Aggies traveled up Highway 6 to take on Baylor. Five A&M turnovers and several big plays by the Bears led to a shocking outcome – so shocking that it has only happened twice in the past 23 years. Senior Jovorskie Lane scored two touchdowns increasing his school record to 49 rushing and 50 overall.

AI KEY PERFORMER:
LB Alton Dixon – 14 tackles,
1 tackle for loss

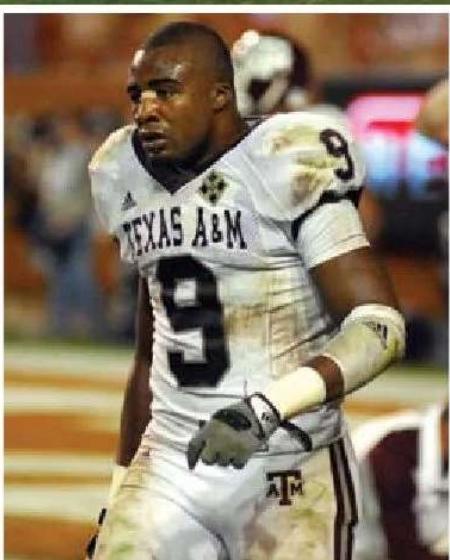
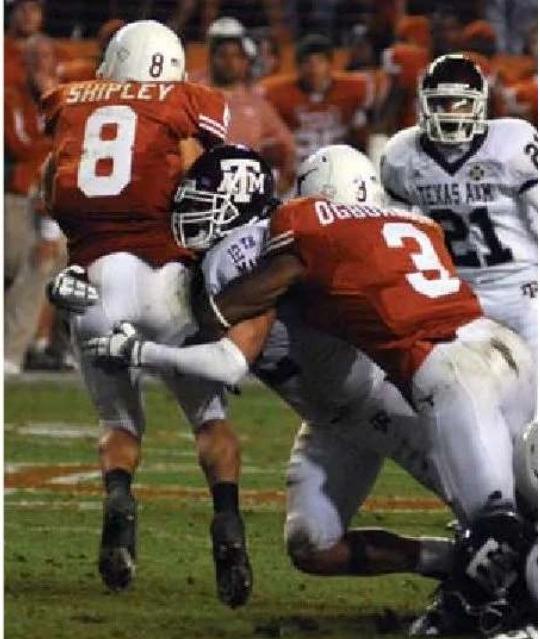


AT TEXAS

L
LONGHORNS 49, AGS 9

Unfortunately, the Ags could not make it three in a row over archrival Texas. A surprisingly strong defensive effort in the first half gave the Longhorns fits and A&M some hope, but the Aggie offense was unable to reach the end-zone until the game was out of reach. Stephen McGee provided a spark in his last game in an Aggie uniform, but couldn't pull off the upset this time.

AI KEY PERFORMER:
QB Stephen McGee – Passing: 16-24,
207 yards



nick LAMANTIA

Ten questions for the senior walk-on fullback and quintessential 12th Man representative BY AI STAFF

What made you decide to walk on at Texas A&M?

My brother. When I was younger, I wanted to go to SMU. One of my brothers played for SMU and the other played for A&M. I talked to Michael about it – the brother who played here – and decided I wanted to come play football with him.

Do you remember the first time you donned the No. 12 jersey to represent the 12th Man?

Oh heck yeah. It was the Citadel game in 2006, and it was also my mom's birthday. When I found out that I was going to be representing the 12th Man, I called one of my best friends, Andrew Hall. I told him that he was the only one who knew and I asked him to call my mom right when the game started and tell her, "Happy birthday, Nick is going to be the 12th Man today." Sure enough, he did it, she started crying, and it was the best present I could have given her. It was huge and something I'll remember for a long time. On top of that, I got to play and made a couple of tackles. I loved it.

Fast forward to the Oklahoma game this season. What was it like to put on that jersey for the final time at Kyle Field?

It has been one heck of a run. I've been here five years. I came from the very bottom and worked my way up as far as I could go. Wearing the jersey for the last time on Kyle Field was very bittersweet.

Where would you be right now if you had not come to A&M?

You know, I don't know. I think if football had not been a part of my life, I would have been in trouble somewhere. I guess I would just be a random student at either A&M or SMU. I've never really thought about it.



"My dad put it best. He said, one brother knocked on the door, another opened the door, and I walked through it."

What is the most interesting place you have visited?

When I was nine or ten years old, I went to Calgary, Canada, and I went to a rodeo there. I'm from a country background, so I loved to go to rodeos and stock shows.

Who do you look up to?

My family – my parents and my two brothers – without a doubt. They have provided me so much love, support and inspiration. My oldest brother, Greg, walked on at SMU after not getting many looks out of high school, but eventually had to give it up to focus on business school. My other brother, Michael, tried out several times to be a walk-on at A&M and the third time, he made it. Ever since then, I knew I wanted to follow his footsteps. My dad put it best. He said, one brother knocked on the door, another opened the door, and I walked through it.

Do you have a favorite place to play football besides Kyle Field?

Probably my backyard. If not there, then Nebraska. They are some of the nicest people in the world.

What is your most memorable moment on Kyle Field?

My first chance to play, which ironically, was against SMU. We were ahead in the game, so coach decided to put me in on a kickoff. My dad had told me that since SMU didn't want me, if I ever got the chance to play them, I needed to make a statement and let them know they made a mistake. Sure enough, I got the opportunity on the kickoff and made a tackle on the 20 yard line, which is huge. And I played some at linebacker and made a few more tackles. That's a moment I will always remember.

What's in store for you now that college football is over?

I think every football player has a wish to play in the NFL or somewhere professionally, and if I have the opportunity I'm certainly going to take it. If that doesn't work out, my family has a business that I want to work for. I really want to go back to where my roots are and be around my family and start a family of my own.

Why do you love Texas A&M?

The tradition and the family atmosphere. It's like being at home. I have a big family and this is just like a big family to me. It's a wonderful place to be and I'm going to miss it. **AI**

AI AWARDS

BIG 12 AWARDS

OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR

QB Sam Bradford, Oklahoma

DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR

DE Brian Orakpo, Texas

OFFENSIVE FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR

QB Robert Griffin, Baylor

DEFENSIVE FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR

DB Trent Hunter, Texas A&M

COACH OF THE YEAR

Mike Leach, Texas Tech

ALL BIG 12 TEAM

OFFENSE

QB Sam Bradford, Oklahoma
 RB Kendall Hunter, Oklahoma State
 RB DeMarco Murray, Oklahoma
 WR Dez Bryant, Oklahoma State
 WR Michael Crabtree, Texas Tech*
 TE Jermaine Gresham, Oklahoma
 OL Jason Smith, Baylor
 OL Jon Cooper, Oklahoma
 OL Phil Loadholt, Oklahoma
 OL Duke Robinson, Oklahoma*
 OL Louis Vazquez, Texas Tech

DEFENSE

DL Brandon Williams, Texas Tech
 DL Gerald McCoy, Oklahoma
 DL Ndamukong Suh, Nebraska
 DL Brian Orakpo, Texas
 LB Travis Lewis, Oklahoma
 LB Sergio Kindle, Texas
 LB Joe Pawelek, Baylor
 DB Jordan Lake, Baylor
 DB Ryan Palmer, Texas
 DB William Moore, Missouri
 DB Darcel McBath, Texas Tech

SPECIAL TEAMS

K Jeff Wolfert, Missouri
 P Justin Brantly, Texas A&M*
 PR Dez Bryant, Oklahoma State
 KR Cyrus Gray, Texas A&M

*repeat selection from last season

AI ALL NAME TEAM

OFFENSE

QB Zack Asack, Duke
 RB Shady Salamon, Minnesota
 FB Steele Hull, LSU
 WR Cooter Arnold, North Carolina
 WR Patch Duda, Virginia
 TE Brad Smelley, Alabama
 OL Matt Stankiewitch, Penn State
 OL Patrick Omameh, Michigan
 OL Jordan White-Frisbee, Washington
 OL Jodi McKissic, Clemson
 OL Rocko Khouri, Michigan

DEFENSE

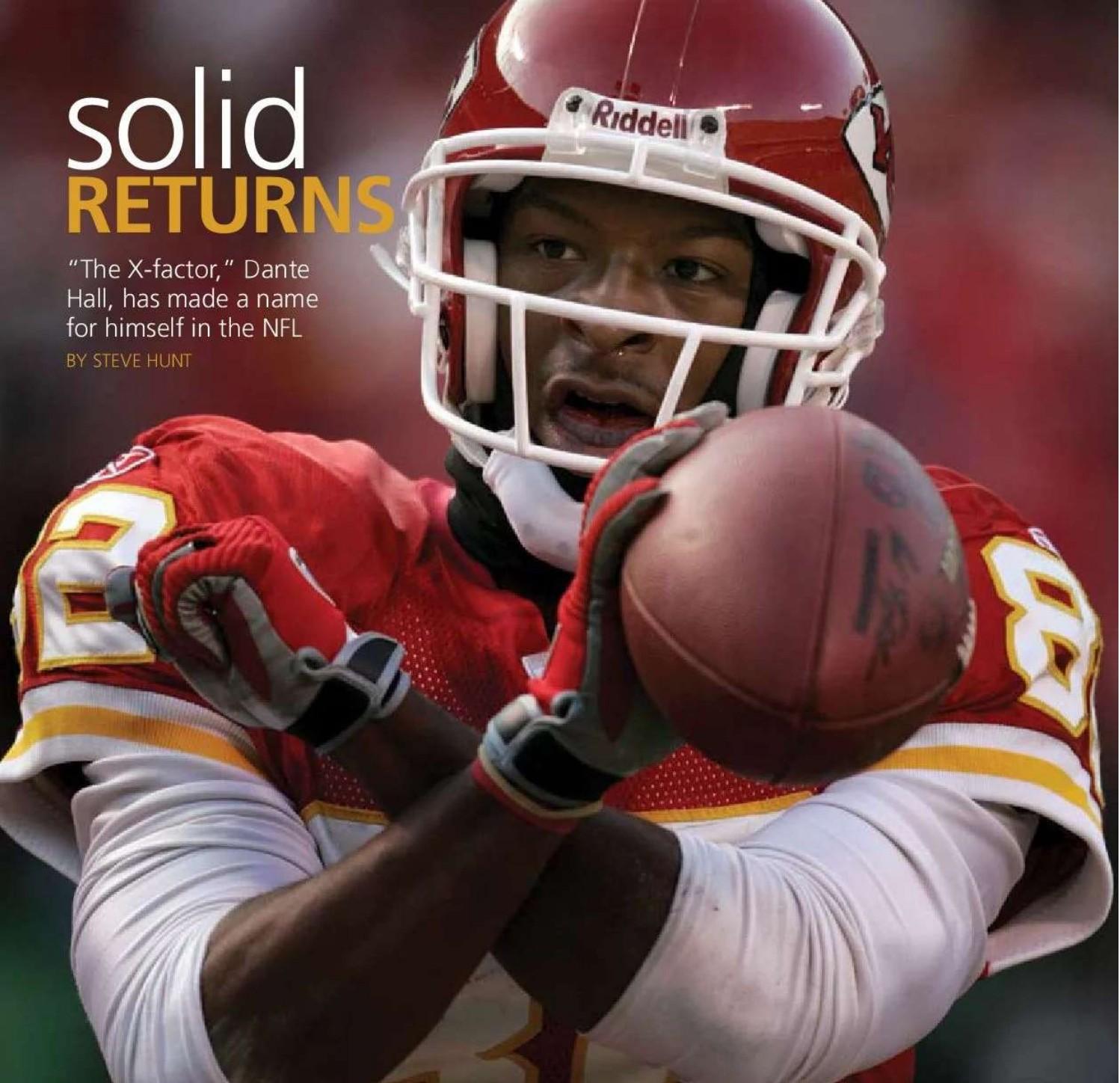
DL Matt Disney, Arizona
 DL Tim Fugger, Vanderbilt
 DL Brandon Farney, Alabama
 DL Stephen Ruempolhamer, Iowa State
 LB Yourhighness Morgan, Florida Atlantic
 LB Mister Alexander, Florida State
 LB Alex Hrebec, Kansas State
 DB Sean Cattouse, California
 DB Knowledge Timmons, Penn State
 DB Frank Duong, Purdue
 DB Razzie Smith, Boston College

AI STAFF BOWL PREDICTIONS	JASON MCCONNELL	BRIAN DAVIS	JEREMY KSIONDA	ROB HAVENS	KATIE MCCONNELL	KIM DAVIS	STACEY KSIONDA	SHAWN KRUSE
EagleBank Bowl Wake Forest vs. Navy								
New Mexico Colorado State vs. Fresno State								
St. Petersburg Memphis vs. S. Florida								
Pioneer Las Vegas BYU vs. Arizona								
New Orleans Southern Miss vs. Troy								
San Diego CCU Pointsettia Boise State vs. TCU								
Sheraton Hawaii Hawaii vs. Notre Dame								
Motor City Florida Atlantic vs. Central Michigan								
Meineke Car Care West Virginia vs. North Carolina								
Champs Sports Wisconsin vs. Florida State								
Emerald Miami vs. California								
Independence Northern Illinois vs. Louisiana Tech								
Papajohns.com NC State vs. Rutgers								
Valero Alamo Missouri vs. Northwestern								
Roady's Humanitarian Maryland vs. Nevada								
Texas Rice vs. W. Michigan								
Pacific Life Holiday Oklahoma State vs. Oregon								
Armed Forces Houston vs. Air Force								
Brut Sun Oregon State vs. Pittsburgh								
Gaylord Music City Boston College vs. Vanderbilt								
Insight Kansas vs. Minnesota								
Chick-fil-A LSU vs. Georgia Tech								
Outback S. Carolina vs. Iowa								
Capital One Georgia vs. Michigan State								
Konica Minolta Gator Clemson vs. Nebraska								
Rose Bowl Penn State vs. USC								
FedEx Orange Cincinnati vs. Virginia Tech								
AT&T Cotton Ole Miss vs. Texas Tech								
AutoZone Liberty Kentucky vs. East Carolina								
Allstate Sugar Utah vs. Alabama								
International Buffalo vs. Connecticut								
Tostitos Fiesta Ohio State vs. Texas								
GMAC Tulsa vs. Ball State								
FedEx BCS National Championship Game Florida vs. Oklahoma								

SOLID RETURNS

"The X-factor," Dante Hall, has made a name for himself in the NFL

BY STEVE HUNT



Prior to a drop off in recent seasons, more Texas A&M players filled NFL rosters than any of their Big 12 rivals. And while many of those Aggies have made their share of headlines in the pros, only a few have become household names.

One exception has been former A&M star running back Dante Hall. A fifth-round draft pick by the Kansas City Chiefs in 2000, Hall has been considered one of the most dangerous return men in the NFL since he burst onto the scene in 2002.

Hall gave a glimpse of his special teams abilities while in Aggieland, setting the school record for punt return yards during his freshman season.

"Overall, it was a great experience," Hall said of his time at

A&M. "I had a great football career – the best I could have hoped for. I didn't graduate but I'm 12 hours from my degree. I met a lot of friends there, some of my best friends to this day I met at A&M."

Hall, who has the most career rushing yards by an Aggie in the last fifteen years, rushed for 1,024 yards during his junior season in 1998. That included 113 yards in his most memorable college game – the Aggies' Big 12 Championship victory over Kansas State.

"That was the first time I had ever played for a championship on any level," Hall recalls. "I can remember that game vividly. I remember Kansas State throwing tortillas around. That was an

awesome game to play in. An awesome game."

Hall's senior season was not nearly as memorable. He was plagued by an ankle injury and off the field issues eventually got the best of him. Well known on campus for his bad parking habits, Hall's fines at one time reportedly totaled nearly \$1,500. Late in 1999, he was dismissed from the team by then-head coach R.C. Slocum. At the time, Slocum said they had gotten into a situation where it was best to go their separate ways.

With the way his college career ended combined with questions about his size and what position he could play, Hall's future as a professional football player looked bleak.

"When that phone rang, I was shocked because I gave them a number that only they knew," Hall recalls. "I remember the Chiefs' owner saying that they had a parking spot for me already, so that wouldn't be a problem. I knew right then that I was going to an organization that didn't prejudge you or anything like that."

After a disappointing rookie season, the most important development in Hall's career unfolded. The Chiefs' head coach Gunther Cunningham was fired and replaced by Dick Vermeil. The new man in charge saw something special in Hall, and wanted him to become a wide receiver and return specialist. The Chiefs sent Hall to NFL Europe to learn the new position while playing for the Scottish Claymores.

"It helped me tremendously," he said. "I had never played wide receiver, not even in high school or anything. Playing over there made all the difference in the world because when I came back, that's what I had to do to make the team."

Besides helping Hall hone his skills, the experience of living in

a different country broadened his horizons and helped him with life outside of football.

"To this day, I will go overseas to a new country each offseason to pick up on different ways of life," he added.

Vermeil's vision came to life as Hall's second season back in the NFL lead to a selection to play in the Pro Bowl. The following season (2003), Hall became one of the biggest stories in the NFL after returning four kicks for touchdowns in the first eight games. Nicknamed "The X-factor," Hall was the talk of the sports world and was honored again that season with a repeat selection to play in the Pro Bowl.

"I've never been a guy who has really been all about awards and stuff like that," Hall admits. "But then I realized how special it was. I saw Peyton Manning, Donovan McNabb – I could just go on and on. I was sharing the same dinner table and the same locker room with these guys. I was right next to Jerry Rice. It was an awesome experience."

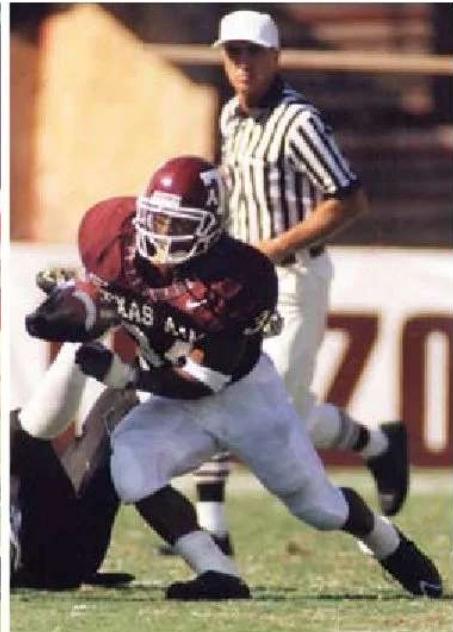
According to Hall, every successful return man needs one quality, what he calls "fearless courage." That unique quality led Hall to his 12th kick return for a touchdown in his career last season – tying him for second-most in NFL history.

After seven productive years with the Chiefs, they decided to trade him. But instead of going across the country, he moved just a few hours down Interstate 70 to St. Louis.

"A lot of people don't have the privilege of staying in the same place for that long," Hall said. "It's a business where you can move around a lot. To go to another team but to be able to go right down the road was great. It's great to have that stability in your career." **AJ**

"I remember the Chiefs' owner saying that they had a parking spot for me already, so that wouldn't be a problem."

—DANTE HALL



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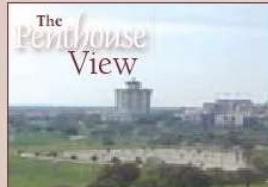
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Audit

MOUNTAIN TO CLIMB

BY JEREMY KSIONDA '04

With year one of the Mike Sherman era coming to a close, it appears as though the Aggies are going to have just as many questions to answer next season as they did in 2008. Unfortunately, those questions are becoming increasingly more difficult to answer as the Big 12 South continues to rise in national prominence.

There's no denying that the Big 12 South trumped the mighty SEC divisions as college football's elite this season. Oklahoma boasted the Heisman Trophy winner and gets a crack at all the marbles against the Florida Gators in the BCS Championship Game. Texas had the Heisman Trophy runner-up and is a heavy favorite in their BCS matchup against the Ohio State Buckeyes. Texas Tech climbed as high as number two in the national rankings and finished with just one loss on the season. Oklahoma State featured the number one rushing attack in the nation for most of the season, and Baylor showed marked improvement under first-year head coach Art Briles.

The really bad news for the Aggies is that with the exception of Texas Tech, who will lose quarterback Graham Harrell and probably wide receiver Michael Crabtree, each one of those teams should be as good if not better in 2009. Though the task ahead for Sherman and the Aggie coaching staff is daunting, it certainly isn't insurmountable.

Through recruiting, player development, patience, the right attitudes and maybe even a little bit of luck, the Aggies can once again become a nationally prominent program. The youth movement that started this fall with freshmen such as Ryan Tannehill, Trent Hunter, Cyrus Gray, Tony Jerod-Eddie and Jeff Fuller will trickle over into the offseason and help change the attitude within the locker room.

With spirits held high and an influx of more talented youngsters hungry to make a difference, the Aggies can begin the transformation of their football team. The offensive line will need to undergo a complete overhaul and the search for linebackers will stretch far and wide. The offensive coaches can build upon the record-breaking performances of Jerrod Johnson and the receiving corps. True freshman Randy Bullock will be trusted as the most reliable Aggie kicker since Kyle Bryant, but finding someone to fill the shoes of punter Justin Brantly will be a tall task.

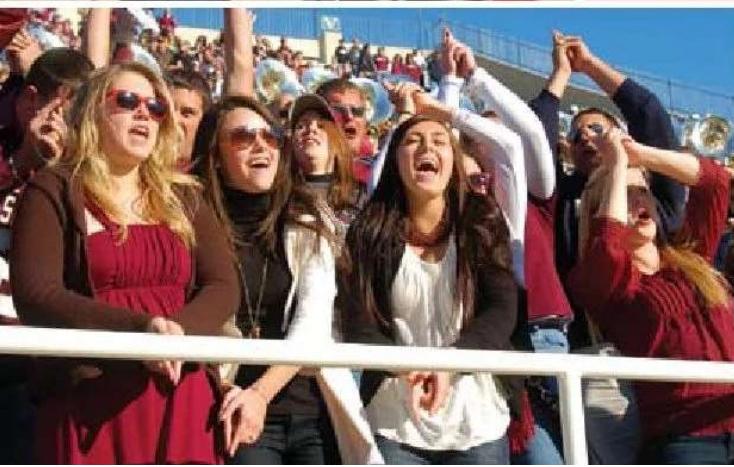
While the 2009 season remains an eternity away for A&M fans, it's easy to foresee that the Aggies will take their lumps in a continued rebuilding effort. If Coach Sherman and the rest of the coaching staff can continue to build upon the positives on offense and fill the gaping holes on the defensive side of the ball with young playmakers, A&M can slowly chip away at the Big 12 South mountaintop. With the right attitudes and a little bit of luck maybe the Aggies can get there sooner rather than later. **AJ**



the12thman



(top left) The Fightin' Texas Aggie Band marches to the YMCA building for Yell Practice following the Aggies' win over Colorado. (top right) The Ags' No. 1 fan. (above) Senior Corps members saw varsity's horns off before kickoff. (above left) After arriving on campus by helicopter in "Marine One," President George W. Bush speaks at the Texas A&M Fall Convocation. (left) Aggies gather to take pictures and pet Reveille. (right) Reveille VIII poses for a picture with Oklahoma cheerleaders. (bottom left) As usual, Aggie fans did their part to fill Floyd Casey Stadium for the Baylor game. (bottom right) Proud members of the 12th Man at Kyle Field. (facing page) Yell Leaders make their traditional trip to the Fish Pond following A&M's win over Colorado.





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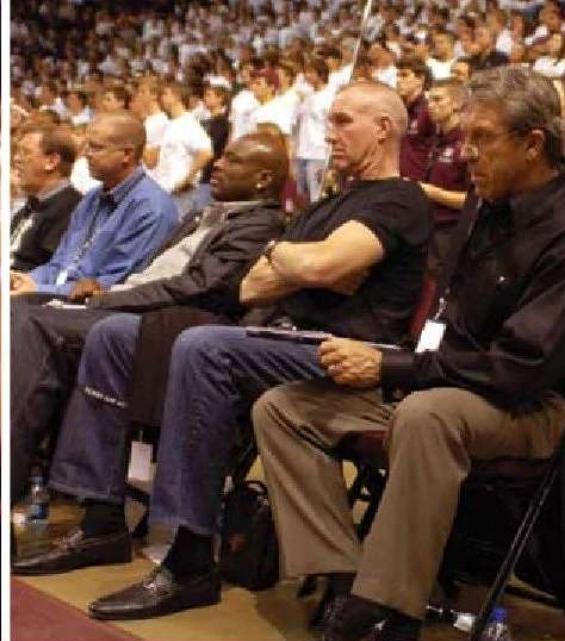
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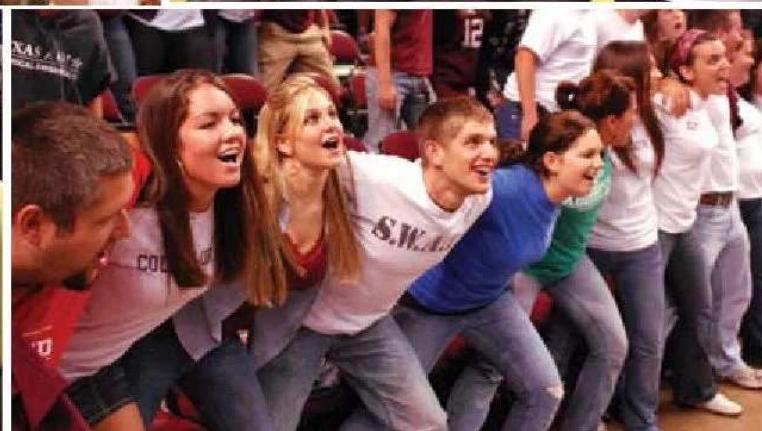
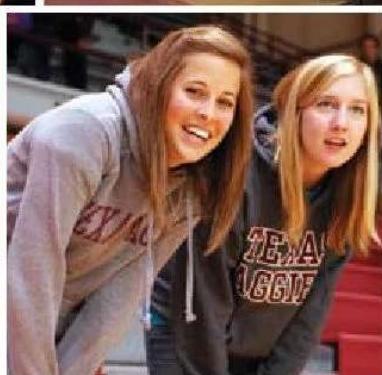
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(above) The Texas Aggie Dance Team entertains the crowd during halftime. (top right) A record number of NBA scouts were in attendance for the Arizona game, including former Golden State star Chris Mullin. (right) Volleyball fans might have seen the last match ever at G. Rollie White. (far right) Some of the magic of the Arizona game victory can be attributed to Aggie legend Dominique Kirk, who was in attendance for the thrilling contest. (below) Fans celebrate the win over Arizona on the Reed Arena floor. (below, right) The Texas A&M softball outgoing seniors receive their Big 12 Championship rings during halftime of a men's basketball game. (bottom, left and right) Men's and women's basketball fans saw varsity's horns off.



A VOICE IN AGGIELAND

BY LAUREN KERN '09

When a loud, booming voice comes over the Kyle Field intercom, it stands for something more than just an echo of noise in a crowd of thousands. It's the "Voice of Aggieland." A voice that stands for the spirit and power of the Aggies.

"And now, the Fighting Texas Aggies," the voice says as the stadium surges with hollers and whoops from field level to the highest row of third deck. For over 20 years, that voice was Dr. Roger Feldman.

Feldman was the public address announcer at Kyle Field from 1977 until he retired in 2000. However, Feldman wasn't just the voice of Kyle Field and the Aggie Football team. His voice has echoed in classrooms of the vet school, at countless volleyball and basketball games, and at commencements when Aggies take their last steps across the stage at graduation.

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

Feldman was born in 1925 and grew up on a farm in Iowa. He went to a one-room school house covering nine grades with 32 students and only one teacher. At his high school, he was a part of the biggest graduating class – 23.

In 1950, he graduated from Iowa State with a degree in veterinary medicine. While at Iowa State, he developed a passion for anything and everything sports related.

"You name it, I did it," Feldman said.

He took tickets at all events, and when a major network came in to cover football games, he was a spotter for the radio stations. That's how he got started working in press boxes, where years later he would wind up spending most of his time.

After graduation, Feldman practiced veterinary medicine for seven years in three different clinics in three different communities. In 1957, he found himself working for the Federal Inspection Service doing meat and poultry inspection.

However, his years in college were his fondest and he couldn't help but want to be back in the academic setting.

"I spent the best five years of my life in college and I didn't think I would ever get that again," Feldman admits.

As luck would have it, he wound up back in college earning his Master of Pathology from Auburn University. Feldman found himself working for the Federal Inspection Service once more after graduating, but he still felt a calling to be surrounded by the spirit of college. That call finally came from College Station.



COMING TO AGGIELAND

"I had never been within 100 miles of College Station," Feldman admits. "My wife and I drove here. I told them I was looking for work and things just sort of fell into place from there."

He began his career at Texas A&M on July 1, 1965. He hasn't left since that day.

"I loved school. I love being around the academic community and that's why we haven't left," Feldman said. "Everything I enjoy doing is here."

His day job was professor in the College of Veterinary Medicine. On the side, he gave new meaning to the term 12th Man despite growing up in Iowa.

Feldman got involved in sports immediately. From 1965 to 1968, he refereed basketball practices for coach Shelby Metcalf. In the fall of 1968, Feldman once again felt the itch to work in press boxes like he had done at Iowa State, so he began working as a statistician for visiting teams at Kyle Field.

One day that November, the press box announcer didn't show up to work and Feldman jumped at the opportunity to fill his seat. From that point forward, he announced at games when the official announcer didn't make it, and in the fall of 1969, he took over the position completely.

Shortly thereafter, he became the press box announcer for basketball and volleyball games. When women began playing basketball at Texas A&M, Feldman took on that task as well.

In 1977, he jumped from press box to field announcer when C.K. Esten retired after being the voice of Kyle Field for 30 years. And that's where Feldman remained for the next 23 years.

Along the way his wife, Kim, has joined him in his endeavors to support the Spirit of Aggieland. Often times she was just there to stay by his side.

"The first time I went to a football game," she recalls, "I heard his voice on the PA and I thought, 'wow, that's my husband.'"

Kim even worked alongside him in press boxes including the Cotton Bowl doing chart participation for one of the teams.

VOICE OF AGGIELAND

Feldman's work wasn't just limited to the press box as he continued to serve the Aggie community in many more ways. In 1969, Feldman began reading commencement for the vet-

erinary school, and soon thereafter for university commencements as well.

"I read at every university commencement from 1969 until I retired in May of 2000," Feldman said.

Still to this day, he continues to read at the commencements for the School of Veterinary Medicine and has only missed one in the past 40 years due to health reasons.

Prior to commencements, Feldman would spend hours on the phone, calling to get correct pronunciations of names.

"He would make almost 700 phone calls," Kim recalls. "For six weeks I didn't figure on using the telephone."

Feldman jokes that he has been in thousands of graduates' pictures because he is standing at the podium in the background.

He read the names of every Texas A&M graduate for 31 years including three of his children, a son-in-law, a daughter-in-law and a grandson.

"It's been kind of a family affair," Feldman jokes.

NEVER A DULL MOMENT

Submersed in sports and commencements, Feldman didn't seem to have much free time.

"He did all of this while he was still teaching," Kim adds.

He would teach several hours a semester and attend most sporting events – even when he wasn't working. Despite the long hours and extra work, Feldman says he wouldn't trade anything for all the chances he's had in his lifetime.

"I've gotten to know so many people," he said. "The flattering part is that they still remember me."

In 1998, Feldman was inducted into the Texas A&M Lettermen's Association Hall of Honor. He is one of the few non-former students to have received this honor. Even though he didn't attend A&M, Feldman can still be called an Aggie in every sense of the word.

Feldman's voice was in the background of basketball, volleyball and football games for many years. He retired from basketball in 1994, volleyball in 1998 and football in 2000. He was still the "Voice of Aggieland," years after he retired from teaching in 1990. And he still hangs around at most sporting events, helping out when he can.

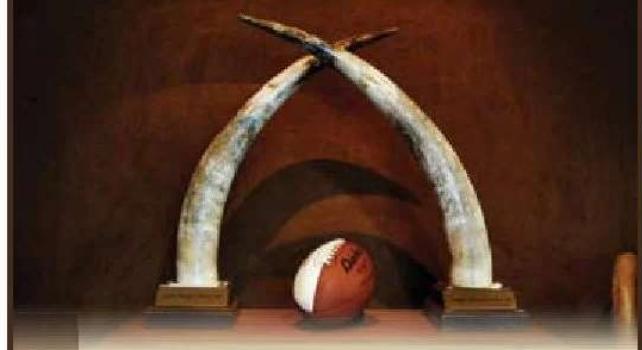
In his 83 years of life, he has witnessed the evolution of the Aggie Spirit from the changing players of a team to the growing community of what we all call Aggieland. He holds dearly to his memories of everything he has experienced.

"I never could have become smart enough in vet school to get all these opportunities," Feldman admits. "I was so fortunate that things always just fell into place. I never looked backwards." **AJ**

"I spent the best five years of my life in college and I didn't think I would ever get that again."

—DR. ROGER FELDMAN

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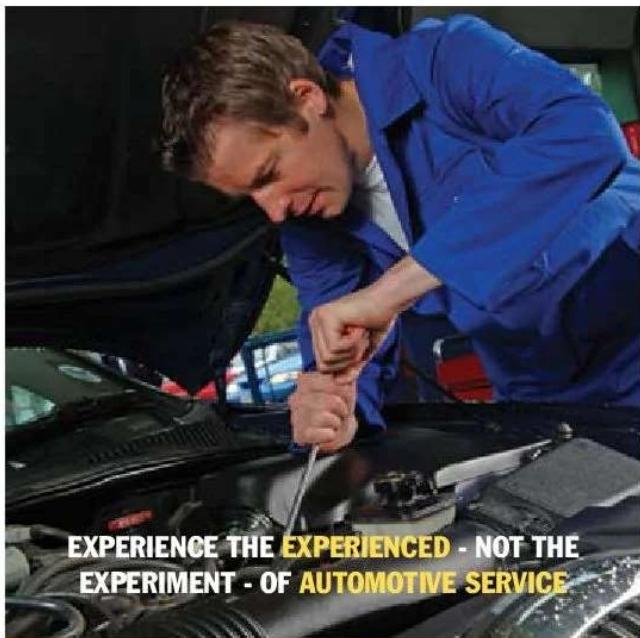
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BY STEPHANIE WHITEHEAD '10

Although David Gardner's Jewelers is in a new location with a new look, the store and its owners are already well-known faces around town. Both David and Julia Gardner grew up in College Station and attended A&M Consolidated High School together. Their entry into the jewelry business started when David began working for Zales in high school. After working there for two or three years, he got a job at an independent jewelry store to pay his way through college.

David graduated from Texas A&M in 1978 with the intention of pursuing a career in marketing. But his plans changed when his best job offer came from a jewelry store in Temple, Texas. That led to an opportunity to work for a jewelry store in Salado, Texas where he first tried his hand at designing jewelry and discovered it was what he wanted to do. David and Julia soon moved back to College Station to open the first David Gardner's Jewelers on University Drive.

What the young couple started 25 years ago has now become a well-loved fixture in the Bryan/College Station community. The two have turned the typically impersonal business of jewelry into a warm, hospitable environment where you are personally attended to in every step of the jewelry buying process. Julia explains that their dedication to having relationships with customers is what makes their store unique.

"We help people celebrate amazing events in their life," she said. "From their very first huge significant purchase to anniversaries and birthdays, we really have the opportunity to get to know people."

Part of what makes the people such an important part of their business is the fact that many of their customers are Aggies. The former students and current undergraduates that frequent the store are what give it a hometown atmosphere.

"About 50 percent of our business is engagement rings," Julia adds, "so we are constantly in touch with the students, and we love that because it gives the business an energy."

The Gardner's give back to their loyal customers through their involvement with local charities and community organizations. Their most recent project has been David Gardner's Big Give, a way to provide funding to selected charitable causes, while recog-

nizing the unsung heroes in our community. The Gardner's have also supported other local charities such as Twin City Missions and the Boys and Girls Club through the years.

"We have a commitment to try and help every organization that asks at least in some way," Julia says of their devotion to making our community a better place any way they can.

The Gardner's plan for the future is to keep their roots firmly planted in College Station soil. Both Julia and David grew up with fathers who were professors at A&M and both have multiple family members that are Aggie graduates.

"Our roots go way back," Julia adds.

One Aggie tradition that Julia never tires of is taking someone to their first Aggie football game at Kyle Field.

"It's always fun to take someone who has never been," she says, "because there is no way to explain it. Each one walks away shocked and amazed."

With this passion for jewelry and a commitment to the community, the Gardner's future in College Station is sure to shine as brightly as their past. ■

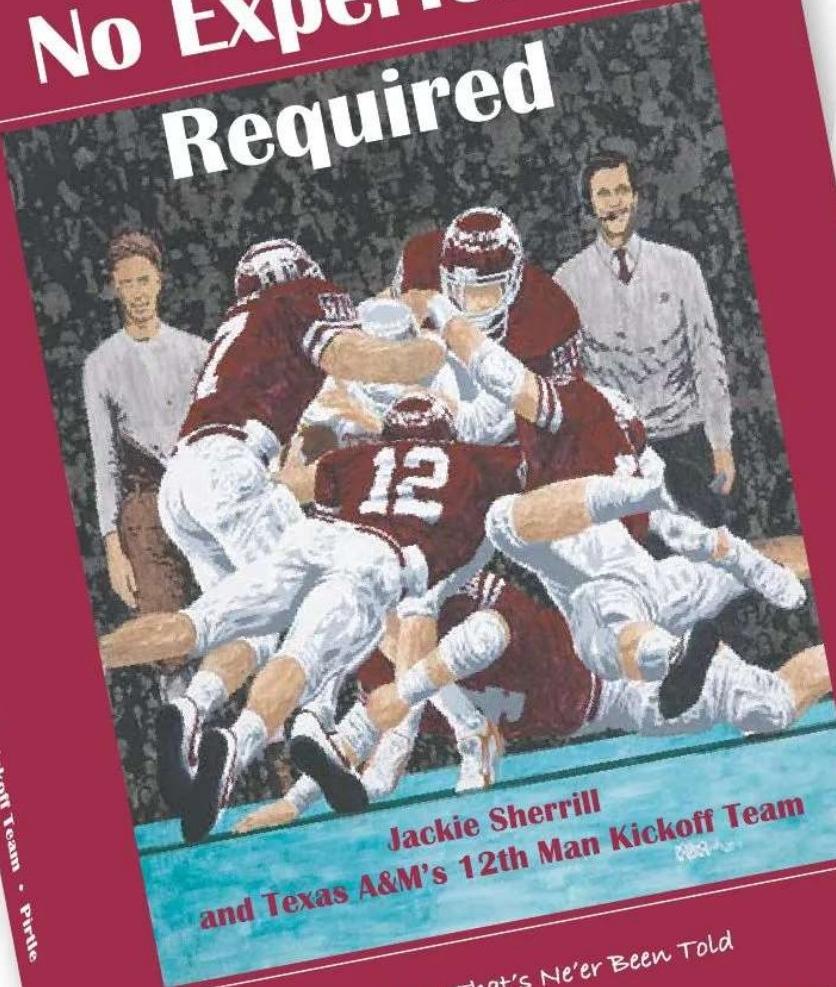




G. Rollie White Coliseum has been home to Texas A&M volleyball since the 1975 season. On November 26, 2008 the Aggies defeated Texas Tech, 3-0, in potentially the final match to ever be played at G. Rollie. The Aggies will relocate to Reed Arena for at least the next three seasons while the Memorial Student Center takes over G. Rollie during a massive renovation of the MSC. The future status of volleyball's return to the Holler House will be evaluated upon completion of the renovation. G. Rollie, which opened in 1954, formerly served as home to the men's and women's basketball but became a volleyball-only facility when the basketball teams moved to Reed Arena prior to the 1998 season.



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